

JADED IN CHICAGO

Issue 9/Summer 2000/FREE



Interviews with:

*American Steel, the Ataris, Dillinger Four, the Gamits,
Honor System, Millencolin*

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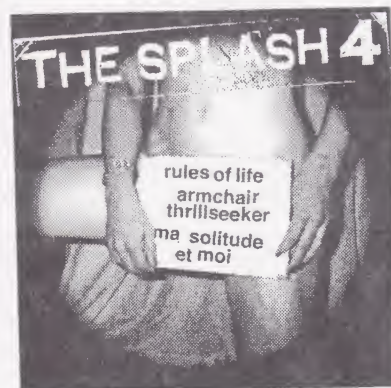
SPLASH 4 *Rules Of Life* LK 241 7" ep



PINHEAD GUNPOWDER *8 Chords, 328 Words* LK 250 7" ep



BLACK CAT MUSIC *One Foot In The Grave* LK 249 7" ep



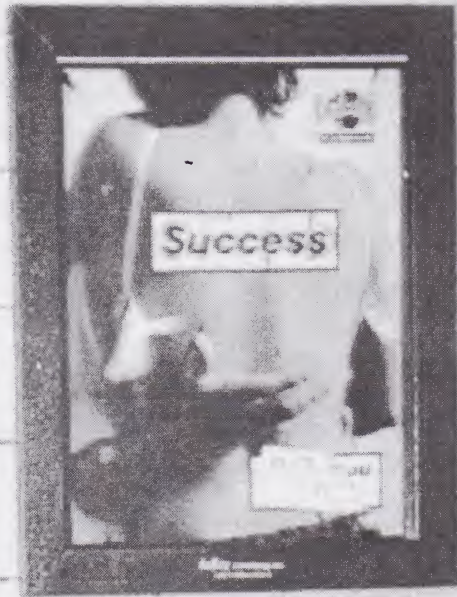
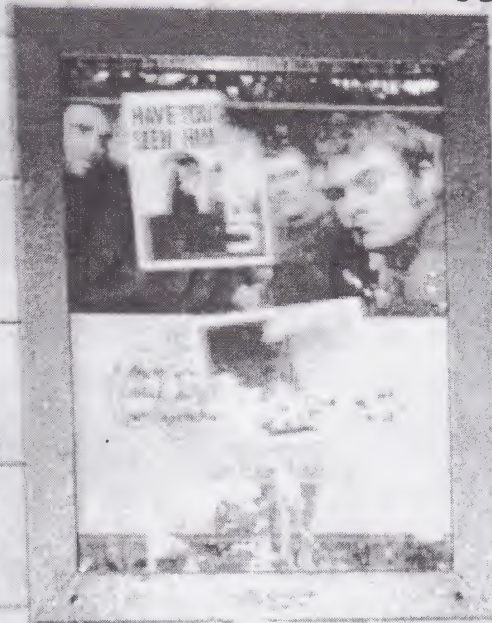
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*Thanks: Fireside Bowl, CMB Printing, Virgil Dickerson, Jeff Axer, Pete Oblivion, Brendan Kelly, Ryan Winepress, Mike Park, Darren Hopeless, Kevin at Vagrant, Sig Transit Gloria crew, Alyse and Clubhouse, Pat Dahl, Craig Sinister, Marc Ruvalo, Scott Harmless, Shawn Skatter, Buffy, Jason at Adeline, Vanessa and Tom at Fat Wreck, Charlie at Epitaph, Tom Sullivan, Andy Lethal and company, Var at No Idea, Dan at Lookout, Kung Fu Records

*This issue is dedicated to Cody Denker, best dog ever.



Editor's Notes

Hey kids! Welcome to yet another fun issue of Jaded In Chicago! First off, let me thank you for picking up and reading our zine; your support honestly means a lot. As I sit here typing this out, this ninth issue that you're now reading is only hours from completion, so if my thoughts seem scattered or this is just filled with grammatical errors, that's why. Anyway... I guess the biggest news I have to offer concerns the birth of our brand-new website, jadedinchicago.com! The page is currently under construction, but should be up and ready by the time you're reading this. We've had a whole bunch of problems with our server, but everything's now ironed-out and well on its way to being up on the web. The site will feature interviews, articles, photographs and a whole bunch of other great stuff. I'm actually considering turning the site into somewhat of an e-zine, and having like special interviews and features and whatnot that will only be available online. I don't think the site will ever replace the printed version of Jaded In Chicago, and by no means will an entire issue ever be posted on the Internet. But I guess what I'm trying to illustrate is that we're looking to really fill the site with a lot of neat stuff and really make it worth visiting. So please, don't hesitate to check out www.jadedinchicago.com!

In other JIC news, our next issue, which is due out in late August, will be the "all-Chicago" issue. The issue will feature interviews with six or so Chicago punk bands and will also boast a whole bunch of columns that'll revolve around Chicago-type topics. It should be a lot of fun, and additional surprises will surely be included. In connection with the "all-Chicago" issue I'm considering putting on my first show, in hopes that a portion of the proceeds from the show will go toward printing costs for our tenth issue. I'd really like to make a super-large number of copies of that issue, and the more money we can raise the better, and the whole show idea-thing definitely sounds like a lot of fun. I'd have four or five of the bands that I'd interview in the issue play the show, which would hopefully be like a Sunday matinee or something at the Fireside. That's all a long way off, and may never happen, but I'd urge you to keep your eyes peeled for flyers if you're interested. Some of the bands that I know I'll be interviewing next issue include Alkaline Trio, Lando's 45, Lawrence Arms, the Arrivals and Sig Transit Gloria, just to name some of 'em. I'm already ultra-excited about that issue and it's almost already underway, so look for that one to hit the streets in about three months.

In the past six years or so that I've been going to shows I think this time period right now is honestly the most excited I've ever been about the local Chicago punk scene. Within the last year so many new and talented bands have formed, all the shows have a real positive-vibe again, and just in general things seem really alive and fun. For the past couple years things were definitely on the decline, but now they're totally taking a dramatic shift upwards. I also think that on the National level, a lot of punk bands have been putting out some really good records in the year 2000. I think I touch on a lot of the stuff I'm talking about here in several of this issue's interviews, so be sure to keep reading! On a personal note, I've had a rather rough start to this Y2K year. Since early February I've been involved in two serious auto accidents, the second was like a seven-car accident in which my car was completely totaled. In the first, I spun-out on "black ice" at around 75mph and ended up in a ditch under a couple feet of snow. Luckily, somehow, I wasn't injured in either accident. I don't have the space or the desire to describe either of the incidents in greater detail, but suffice to say I'm still counting my lucky stars that I'm alive. I'd never been through anything serious like that stuff before and now I really have a more positive and motivated approach to life.

On a lighter note, thank god summer is here! I seriously feel so much more alive during the summertime. For those who don't already know, Chicago winters are pure hell. I'm so glad to see the sun again and not have to worry about freezing my ass off every time I step outside. Two big summer tours are soon to roll through town that both seem like a lot fun, those being the Plea for Peace and Warped tours. Say what you about Warped, but there's a ton a good bands playing this year, especially Green Day! And there's no way I'm gonna miss out seeing them or One Man Army, Hot Water Music, NOFX, the Stereo, etc. It's good to see the tour heading in a more punk band-type direction again. Plea for Peace kicks off with two dates in Chicago and features pretty much the entire Asian Man Records roster. Those shows will no doubt be rockin', and they benefit a great cause, so it's a no-lose situation if you go that. Both of those events will be covered on jadedinchicago.com or perhaps we may even put out a small "summer tours" issue or something; it's a definite possibility.

Again, thanks for reading this issue. If you'd like to offer your comments or criticism we'd love to hear from you, e-mail us at JadedNChi@aol.com. Be sure to go see "High Fidelity" when you get a chance, it's great, and don't forget to visit www.mulletsgalore.com, the web's most enjoyable site.

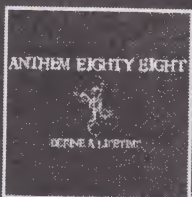
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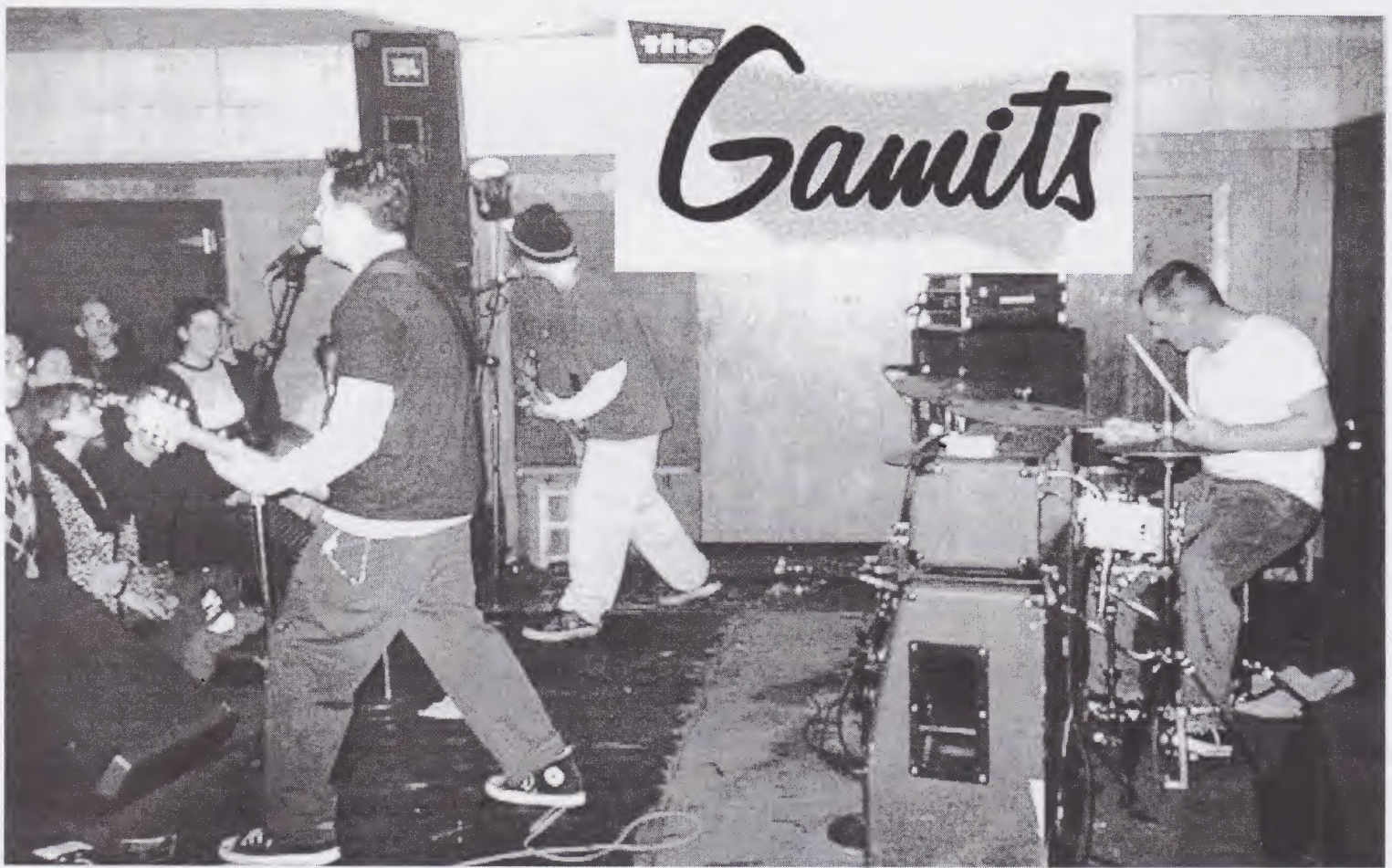
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"Old Blue Eyes is
Dead" -7"



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The Gamits are the best punk rock band that you've never heard of, or at least that most of you living outside their native state of Colorado haven't heard of. It's been several years since I've been exposed to a melodic punk band whose music is filled with this much creativity and energy. Their debut disc just released on Suburban Home Records entitled "Endorsed By You" is truly a masterpiece. And their live performance is just as impressive as their recordings. The Gamits rolled through Chi-town a little while back and opened-up for Oblivion's last show. I talked with lead singer/guitarist Chris and got the scoop on one of the Nation's hottest new punk rock sensations.

JIC-Basic lame-o question first...what's your name and what do you play?

Chris-My name is Chris Fogal, of Norwegian descent, and I play the guitar and sing.

JIC-Your debut album was just released on Suburban Home Records and you've been on tour straight since last week's record release show, correct?

Chris-That's right...we had two shows in Minnesota, one show last night in Green Bay and then here, that's it, fourth show. This has definitely been the best show so far.

JIC-You recorded this album at the "8 Houses" studio, which is in fact the studio that you guys own...and it's also where you live too. Is it tons of fun living together as a band and being able to record everything and basically have this studio right in your own practice-space?

Chris-It's very convenient, but it's like we've been there for four years and the studio's been going on for four years too; it does get kind of annoying at times. Matt, our bass player, does all the recording stuff now...I have absolutely nothing to do with it. But he's constantly busy, so sometimes it's kind of annoying because he does the studio downstairs and half of us live upstairs, and it's really loud. Like the days when somebody's doing drum tracks or whatever you can't watch TV and you can't really do anything...you have to leave. It's kind of annoying, but it pays-off since we can do our own recording for free and we have a good place to practice. Basically it evens out; it's a hassle but it's also really great.

JIC-"8 Houses" is a pretty important studio as far as the Colorado scene goes too...I mean you've recorded almost all of the State's noteworthy punk bands, like the Fairlanes, Pinhead Circus and the Nobodys...

Chris-Yep...the new Nobodys record that Matt did a couple months ago just got sent to our friend Jeff from the Fairlanes, who does mastering in Boulder, and he said it was the best-sounding thing to come out of our studio, so that should be a good one I think.

JIC-Is the band going to be able to do a lot of National touring in the future?

Chris-Yeah, the plan is...Virgil is booking our tours now which is great. And we're going to try and tour at least four months out of this year because none of us really have real jobs, we just kind of scrape by. Like if you're going to do it, then now is the time to do it like crazy. We're going to try and hit the whole US by the end of the year and try and make it everywhere. Right now we're trying to set up a tour with the Nobodys in like two months, like right when their record comes out. We're talking about doing Texas and Florida, and maybe actually coming back up here too.

JIC-Any truth to the rumors that the Gamits might be releasing something on Mutant Pop sometime soon?

Chris-Actually we've just been exchanging e-mails with that guy over the last couple days and he's pretty stoked on the new record. I guess they don't do seven inches anymore, I don't know if you heard about that, but they're going to start doing these short-play CDs. We'll probably for sure do like three or four new songs on the Mutant Pop thing. He's really cool about it, like he said we can use the songs later for whatever we want, like it's fine if want to put them on a full-length someday. Just as long as we don't somehow screw him over, which we wouldn't of course. We're not the fastest songwriters in the world so we want to get working on another full-length right away. This works out good for us because we can do those songs and still use them again later, like re-record 'em or whatever.

JIC-I know that you're a vegan, yet none of the band's lyrics focus on your eating habits...are you not trying to force your ideals on anybody or would you just rather sing love songs?

Chris-I'm not anywhere smart enough to have political content in our lyrics at all; I'll leave that to bands like Propagandhi and stuff who are so good at doing it. Our lyrical content I guess is more about whatever is on my mind that particular day. Some of our songs are relationship-based and some are just like ripping on some lame guy that I found annoying or something. Nothing too deep or too heavy, we're here to entertain, we're not trying to spread a message or anything because that's not our place. I totally respect any band that does that, because if you're doing that and doing it well then more power to you, but we know that's not our place. We're just into trying to write catchy songs and having a good time.

JIC-Virgil Dickerson (Mr. Suburban Home, who's also mentioned above) tells me that you guys grew up on metal, but also that the Beatles have been a huge influence on you...

Chris-Yeah, they were, not so much for the past four or five years, but originally they were...But yeah, all three of us totally grew up on metal. We all had our cheesy metal bands when we were young and pretty much just took it as far as we could. Matt and I sort of discovered the Beatles for ourselves when we were like 18 or something. They woke us up to the fact that there's melody and all sorts of more music other than angry speed metal. The Beatles more so than any other band just woke us up that there was more out there. Actually we didn't even get into punk rock until like six years ago, and then we just found where we belong.

JIC-I think you're one of the few melodic punk bands in the past couple of years who's come out with just a totally original sound...do you feel that punk rock could use a bit more creativity these days, and how unique do you find your music to be?

Chris-There's so many bands out there...I don't think punk rock needs any more creativity, I mean there's so many creative people around. But when you do find a gem in the pile of shit it makes it that much better. It's kind of almost good to have a million shitty bands because once you fall upon a really good band it's like they're priceless.

JIC-Aren't you guys both bummed and excited to be playing Oblivion's last show today?

Chris-Yep, definitely. I mean I love them...I haven't been into Oblivion until Virgil introduced me to them since he put out their last CD, but...They're a great band and we totally appreciate them sticking us on this show. It was great because even though we played early there were still plenty of people here to check us out. So it sucks they're not going to be a band anymore, it seems like they're just getting better and better; it seems like a shitty time to quit now, but I guess that's just how it goes.

JIC-When will this tour that you're currently on wrap-up and lead you back home? What are your plans for summer?

Chris-We'll get home on the 24th to play with Agent Orange in Denver, which is weird because like 11 years ago when I was skateboarding and listening to Agent Orange I would have never thought I'd be playing with them. I guess for summer we've got a few more small tours planned, but we really need to get started on writing some new songs because we've been playing these ones a little too long, I mean for Denver anyway. There's only a couple brand new songs that people weren't familiar with on the new record. It'd be nice to get started on that Mutant Pop thing...that's probably about it.

So...if you're smart you'll be sure to check out the Gamits sometime in the near future. I'm not even kidding...these guys are the best band I've heard/seen in quite a while; they're also a bunch of really nice guys. Thanks again to Virgil and the Gamits for being so kind. For more info try www.thegamits.com.



Local Band Features

Sig Transit Gloria



I still remember walking into the Fireside Bowl and witnessing a Sig Transit Gloria performance for my first time; it was truly the most excited I'd been about a local band in years. Sig Transit's songs totally embody this fun-spirited sense of rock that simply puts a smile on my face. After only being together a matter of months, this band was signed to Johannis Face Records, and their subsequent CD entitled "2/8/00" will be released late this June.

According to the band's keyboard-player, Mike, "We sound like a poppy 80's punk rock band with keyboards."

I couldn't do a better job of describing this native Villa Park quartet, other than saying they simply rock. These kids play shows almost every weekend and this summer are looking to do a mini-tour of the Midwest. Their live performance is a really good time and I highly recommend you go see 'em play, and if you heckle them enough they just might play their cover of the Nirvana song "Sliver."

"If everything goes as I would like we'll leave around early July and play St. Louis, Minneapolis, Detroit and a couple other cities," singer/guitarist Nate said.

Contact Sig Transit Gloria at www.sigtransitgloria.cjb.net.

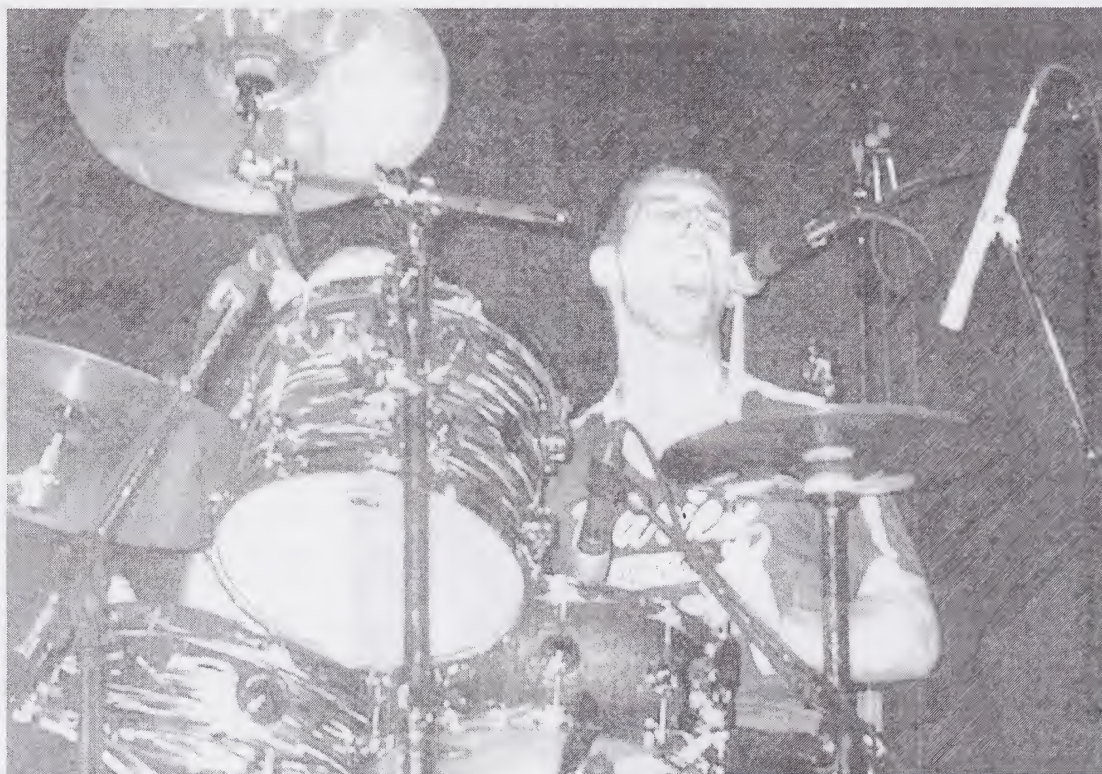
Logan's Loss

Logan's Loss is easily one of the hardest-working bands in Chicago. The members haven't even graduated high school yet, but Logan's Loss has already played over 100 shows. They've also self-released their own CD and have plans to tour this summer. They've been rockin' out for three years already and are showing no signs of slowing down.

"We just want to play anywhere, anyhow. We've been strictly rotating around the Midwest playing shows, and we play a lot in various suburbs and a little in Chicago too," singer/bassist Craig said.

Some call Logan's Loss a ska band, some say they're punk, some even say they're emo, but their singer Craig put it best when he said, "We're just a rock 'n roll band."

This four-piece outfit hails from Downers Grove and this summer are scheduled to release a split CD with local favorites Hot Stove Jimmy. They're also slated to have a song on the upcoming Sinister Label compilation. Next year the band plans to stick together and keep playing shows, as three of the four members will remain in the Chicagoland area for college. Look for Logan's Loss playing tons throughout the summer and check out their website at <http://members.xoom.com/logansloss>. You can also e-mail the band at geekweek@juno.com.



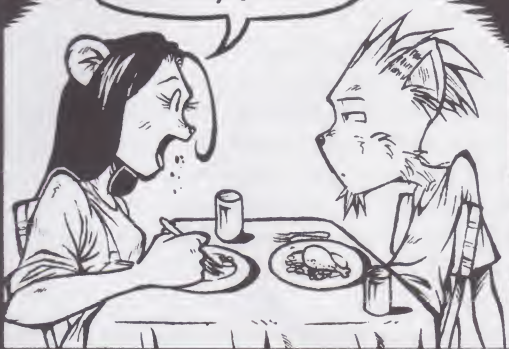
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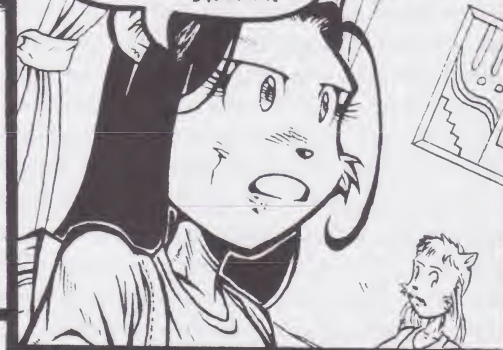
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DINNER CONVERSATION-
LESS IS MORE

SO LIKE ALL THESE GUYS
WERE SUCH TOTAL DEADBEATS. I
THOUGHT I MIGHT NEVER GO ON
ANOTHER DATE AGAIN. THEN I
MET YOU, AND SOMEHOW I
WORKED UP THE NERVE TO ASK
YOU OUT, BRANDON!



I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD
FIND A GOOD SWEET GUY LIKE
YOU. AND YOU ARE A
MUSICIAN TOO! SUCH AMBITION.
THOSE OTHER GUYS WERE
GOING NOWHERE FAST.
SUCH LOSERS! I
SWEAR.



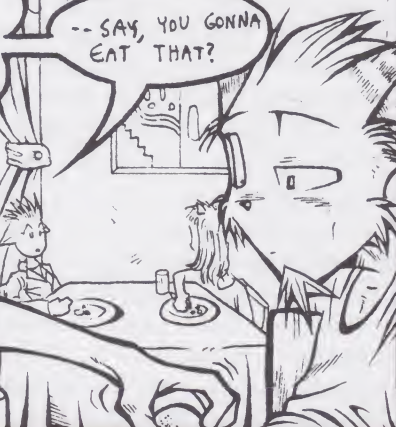
UH... I'M NOT THAT
GREAT. MY FRIENDS DO
TELL ME I SHOULD TAKE
THE "SPECIAL BUS" THOUGH.
I GUESS THAT'S COOL.



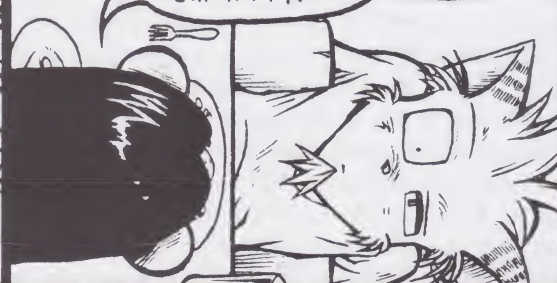
OH AND YOU ARE SO FUNNY, TOO!
ALWAYS JOKING LIKE THAT. I ALWAYS
WANTED A GUY WHO COULD MAKE
ME LAUGH. OH, THIS IS ALL GOING SO
WELL! I'M JUST SO HAPPY. I MEAN
I FEEL I COULD SHARE ANYTHING
WITH YOU. JUST SIT AND TALK
ALL NIGHT LONG--



-- SAY, YOU GONNA
EAT THAT?



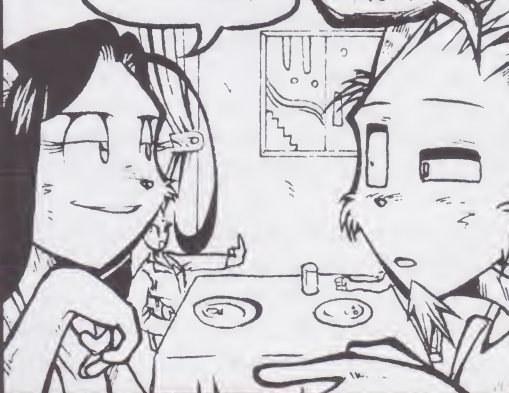
SO TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF MORE,
YOUR MUSIC TOO. I LOVE MUSIC.
YOU HAVE A GUITAR RIGHT? CAN
YOU RAY ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH? I
LOVE THAT SONG. YOU DON'T PLAY
LOUD DO YOU? I GET HEADACHES.
THIS IS GOOD FOOD. THIS IS ALL
WORKING OUT SO WELL!
I'M HAPPY!



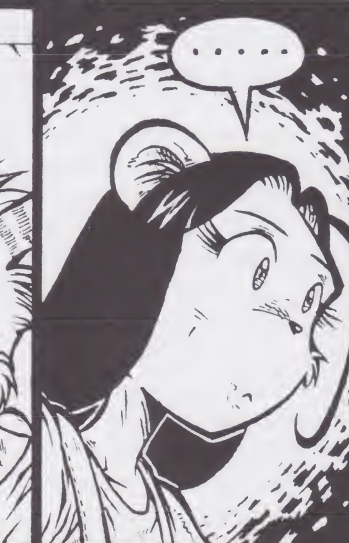
OH HOW RUDE OF ME,
I HAVEN'T LET YOU
TALK AT ALL.



SO TELL ME, WITH
ALL THIS, WHAT ARE
YOU THINKING?



... I ATE A
COCK ROACH
ONCE.



YOUR'RE ACTUALLY
SERIOUS, AREN'T
YOU.



OKAY, SO TWICE.
BUT THEY WERE
LIKE... DEAD
AND STUFF.



Sickening City Planning

By Brendan Kelly

First off, this is not a well-researched sociological or demographic study. Nothing of the sort. In fact, as I type this, early on a Thursday morning, I'm exhausted and hung-over and the idea of trying to weave facts and figures into something even remotely worth reading seems damn near impossible. Besides, while a more scholastic approach to this topic would certainly be enlightening, it is in no way the only effective treatment of this subject. Now that that's out of the way, I'm gonna write on the subject of city planning. Specifically, I'm talking about the treacherous and repulsive "progress" that Chicago has made since I was a little kid. But first, I would like to talk about restaurants and stores.

Take a great Chicago neighborhood like Uptown or old Irving Park. In these neighborhoods, if you want a piece of pizza, you can go to great places like Gigio's on Broadway. If you want to buy a wacky shirt or something stupid like that, you can go to the enormous costume store on Milwaukee, just north of Irving. If you want Mexican food, there's hundreds of tiny places on every block. There's little grocery stores and

supermercado's for all your specialty shopping needs, and great local bars with tons and tons of character, (and characters inside). These places are sometimes great, (the costume store is one of the coolest establishments in the city, go there) and sometimes pretty sucky, (the supermercado by my house is filthy and never has anything remotely appetizing on its shelves). But the thing is, they are neighborhood places, it feels good to shop there, and when you find a really awesome and remote place, it's a great feeling. Not unlike the feeling that most punk rock kids get from knowing that no one in their high school class has ever heard of the amazing band that they listen to. I read an interview with Ian Mackaye a while back and he said, when asked about why his huge band never made the jump to MTV or anything, since Dischord has enough money and clout that they could probably do it on their own terms... That he felt that for kids, it was a lot more rewarding to hear great music that they had to search for, and that how hard you search is often directly proportional to how great the reward is when you find something. In my opinion, the same holds true with restaurants and shops and shit in your neighborhood.

Now, take a town like Pocatello, Idaho. A few years ago, I went to Pocatello on tour, and granted, I was only there for one day, and I'm not claiming to be the world's most renowned expert on the subject of Pocatello. But as far as I could tell, there wasn't shit in that town besides Taco Bell, McDonalds, KFC, Venture, Wal-Mart and crap like that. First of all, it made the town look totally shitty. The whole place looked like the little food-gas-lodging strips that surround virtually every expressway exit in the country. It was nothing but buildings all cut from the same mold, huge nasty signs, parking lots, and drive-thru's. The town had no commercial character. I could have been anywhere, for all I knew, which is a shame, because Idaho is a beautiful state and everyone that I met from Pocatello was really great.

Besides the crappy appearance, it had to be depressing as hell to live there. There's no cool places to discover. There's no variety and there's no neighborhoody thrill at all involved in going to McDonalds. Right now, if I want an amazing burrito, I can go to the Taqueria Los Alamos, which is half a block from my house. For three bucks, I get a huge veggie burrito, filled with avocado, rice, beans, homemade salsa and tons of other shit. It is amazing, and it's open 24 hours. If my friend Bramer from Pocatello wants a burrito, he has the choice of the burrito supreme, the enchirito (gooey cheese), the bean burrito, the chili cheese burrito, etc. I'm sure that most people have eaten at Taco Bell and I don't need to continue this list. Fact is Taco Bell sucks. Their shit is totally loaded with all kinds of preservatives and softening agents and shit, it's fake, it's band for you, it tastes like poo, and going there is no fun at all. (A quick aside: if you're ever on a road trip and you go into Taco Bell be sure to do the following. Say that you went through the drive-thru the day before and that your order got fucked up, but that you didn't realize it until you got home, and now is the first time that you've had to come back - they will give you free food. The Broadways survived like this on tour for quite some time when we had no money). I'm sure that for the most part, I'm preaching to the converted here, since those big chains like Wal-Mart and McDonalds are huge whipping boys in the punk rock community already, and for good reason - they blow. I'm just trying to establish why the next part of this article, which is the main point, is worth writing about.

I was born in St. Louis. When I was nine, I moved to an apartment on Briar Place with my mom. It's basically right there by the original Reckless on Belmont and Broadway. After several moves, (which included old Irving Park and Barrington, IL) me and my mom moved back into Lincoln Park near Fullerton and Clark. For most of my life, since I've been old enough to do anything without my mom, I've thought of the extended Lincoln Park area (Irving Park to Armitage, from Ashland east) as my home. I don't necessarily think that this is the coolest neighborhood in Chicago. In fact, I think that a lot of it really sucks, but it wasn't always the way it is now. The Boys' Town or Lakeview area used to be really seedy when I was small. There were really gross, divey strip-clubs all along Broadway from Belmont to Diversey. It was where all the hookers hung out. (This was particularly frightening for myself and my friend Chris, when at age 12 we used to sneak out of my mom's house and tool around the hood like a couple of geeks). The punks used to hangout in that area, (and not like they do now, there were fucking swarms of gutter punks and real rude boys in three-piece suits who used to beat the piss out of the punks with their gold-headed canes) and it was generally a lot more interesting than it is now. My friend Cary has exceedingly wealthy parents who own a palatial home near Webster and Halsted and they told me that when they first bought their place that *that* neighborhood was pretty sketchy too. If you've never been to Webster and Halsted, it's one of the least sketchy places in the world.

The fact is, white people, usually artists and the like, move into interesting neighborhoods, create a community and then, once the atmosphere is white enough, more white people, usually young professionals, follow them. And generally whitewash the area, at which point the new-bohemia-urban-pioneer-artist kids, (and people who were there first) move out, (because it's lame or because it's too expensive) and the whole thing starts over again. It's gentrification, nothing new. Go to precious Wicker Park sometime and see what a mess all the hipsters made of that once cool neighborhood if you don't believe me. It happened a long time ago in south Lincoln Park, more recently in Lakeview, and it's happening right now in a lot of north side neighborhoods. That sucks. Really bad, in fact. But to delve into that topic would require

research in order to make an effective article and since we've already established that I'm not doing any of that, I'm gonna talk about the grossest, most hideous thing that has ever come out of gentrification. It makes the city look disgusting. It makes every street look the same. It turns my stomach. I'm talking about the town-home movement on Chicago's north side.

You have seen these things. They're huge. They almost always have green doors with gold numbering on them. They're built out of smooth red brick and have smooth white stone in relief around the doors and at various points on the façade. They are all exactly the same, more or less, and they are fucking EVERYWHERE. (And this is where the article will hopefully come together). You think that it sucks to live in a town where all the stores and restaurants are the same? Well what about a town where every dwelling is exactly the same? Go to Lincoln Avenue between Armitage and Webster. It's really unbelievable. These town-homes take up both sides of the street, they run the length of the block and they are mirror images of each other on each side. Standing there, seeing this street that looks like it was popped out of a mold, it's not that difficult to imagine yourself in some freaky world where everyone goes to get the mail at the same exact time and leaves for work at the exact same time and wears the same clothes and has the same number of kids and on and on. It's gross. No two ways about it, fucking repulsive. These things are everywhere. Right now they are throwing a massive one up just north of Irving Park on Clark Street which is sure to rival the mold like conformity of the monstrosities on Lincoln. They've saturated Lincoln Park, Old Town and Lakeview. They've got a good start in Ravenswood and Wicker Park, and one just went up in Uptown, (which is particularly sad to me, since I think that Uptown [Lawrence and Broadway area] is one of the coolest neighborhoods in the city).

It's harder and harder to distinguish neighborhoods from each other because of these things, and it makes me wonder why anyone who would live in one of these things would move to the city in the first place. I mean, it's trite, but wasn't the original point of the suburbs that in the fifties, when all the WWII vets were coming home they wanted a sort of stability and conformity which they could mass produce outside city limits? This is fine, I guess. I mean, after a year of living in the suburbs, I was pretty convinced that they suck, but if that's your gig, more power to you. I don't believe that there's any place for that kind of thing in the city. A city is, by definition, a place where tons of different people create something unique simply by living in close proximity. These town-homes are flourishing because people continue to buy them, and live in them and give the assholes that build them enough money to build more. For a while, I used to get drunk and go write graffiti on these places, but that really didn't do any good. I don't really know what the solution is. As long as there's a market for these things, they are gonna keep popping up and turning our city into one giant homogenous blob, where every house is them same, every block is the same and there's no such things as neighborhoods.

Last night I realized that I really didn't know anything about the south side, besides little white enclaves like Hyde Park and the area right around St. Ignatius, (where I went to school for a year). My friend Ryan and I drove down to 52nd and State and what was most disturbing to me was that for about thirty blocks, every single building was identical. They were all these high rise project-looking structures. They were shitty, sure. But the big thing is that THEY ARE ALL THE SAME! The south side is a really fucked up place for a lot of reasons that I have neither the time nor the resources to go into effectively, but it's a vision of what's to come on the north side with these town-homes. Go out and see for yourself. It's hard to miss. And while you're out there, check out some of the endangered, non town-home dwellings that will soon vanish and pave the way for a nice, wealthy, homogeneous north side to create a grotesque mirror image of the already disturbed south side.

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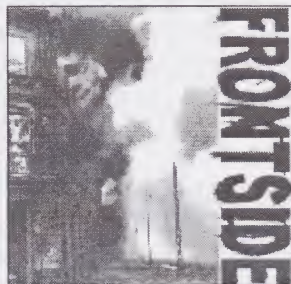
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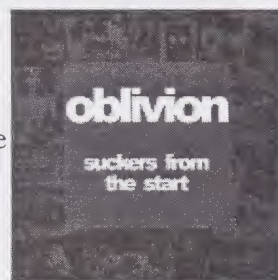
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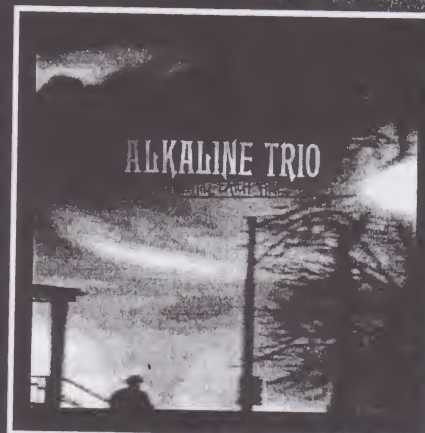
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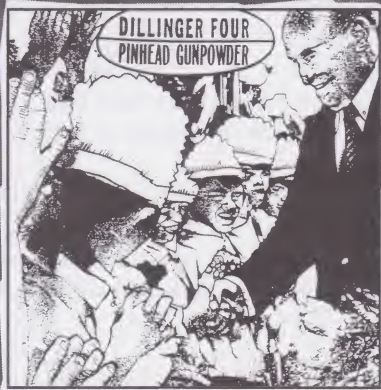
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Ask a Former Zine Editor

By Shawn Skatter

Between school and work and getting shot down by crazy numbers of women, my mind has been pretty occupied. So thinking of a topic for this article was a bit harder than usual. I decided to turn to this box of old zines that I had for a little inspiration. All that happened was I realized that EVERYONE has a zine now. If you don't have a zine, you suck. Also, though, if you do have a zine, IT probably sucks. Well, that's enough of that; I just had to get that off my chest. Anyway, I decided to turn to the old mailbag for ideas, (because as we all know, former zine editors get crazy amounts of mail, especially from hot chicks). What I found was startling - people out there need help from the Skatter! Well, I'm officially one year closer to being a Doctor, (of philosophy in chemical physics, but that's not important) so maybe I can actually help some people. So here's a new segment of "Ask a Former Zine Editor."

Dear Skatter,

I'm in a tough situation. I completely love my boyfriend, but he's about the most uncultured person I've ever met. I've tried my hardest to change him, but to no avail. The breaking point came on our one-year anniversary. We went to a fancy four-star restaurant and while looking at the wine list, he asked the waiter if they had any Boone's! I just can't figure out what to do.

-At Wits End in Alabama

Well, sister, you're from Alabama. You've got about as cultured a man as you're going to get. Men in Alabam-y don't eat quiche. Hell, they couldn't even pronounce it if they wanted to order it in a restaurant. ("Hey, gimme a 'kweechee'"). You need to set your sites lower, let's say Wendy's for example; at least it ain't McDonalds. Besides, you're lucky he just didn't want to celebrate the anniversary by toasting with a 40 of O.E. As a wiser man once said, even if you take the man out of the trailer, you'll never take the trailer out of the man. Good luck.

-Skatter

Dear Skatter,

In the apartment I live in, I share a deck with my next door neighbor. Up until a few weeks ago, I never had a problem with this. My old neighbors were friendly, courteous people. But the new person is loud, obnoxious, and just plain rude. He's this white kid who has his friends over at all hours of the night, drinking, smoking marijuana, and blasting gangster rap on our porch. I'm losing so much sleep. What should I do?

-Snoop-Doggy Dogg Tired in Des Moines

Well, Dogg Tired, The most obvious thing to do would of course be to knock on his door and explain to him that his "get togethers" keep you awake. You're both adults and should be able to work something out. If this doesn't work, you can always try contacting your landlord. Many times having the landlord talk to a noisy neighbor resolves this. However, if after this, the parties still continue, you need to walk out there and put a foot right in his white-bread ass. Then say, "Now listen up DJ Jazzy Trevor, I don't know who your honky-ass thinks you are, but you best take you and your homies up on out of here and go pass the dutchie on the left hand side somewhere else, bitch." This third reaction usually gets the desired response.

-Skatter

Dear Skatter,

I recently moved into this country. Although I'm doing quite well, I haven't yet figured out all of the customs. This is not that bad of a problem, except that I was recently invited to a black tie wedding. I don't want to feel embarrassed by acting out of place at such a formal event, so please help me.

-Worried in Walla-Walla

Well, Worried, you've come to the right spot. Formal is my middle name. Basically what black tie means is that you have to wear a tuxedo. In this country we prefer powder blue, maybe with a ruffled shirt. So get it quickly before the tuxedo rental place runs out of them. Also, don't tell anyone about this. Surprise them with how "American" you've become. They'll love it. The next key is a six pack of tall boys. Tall boys are key to any great formal event. Make sure to drink a sixer on the way there, and bring an extra sixer to the ceremony too. (Recently church beer vendors went on strike, so you'll be a sure-fire hit if you let everyone know that you brought your own). Another American tradition is to interject during every toast throughout the reception. Yell things about the groom's ex-lovers; this is a symbol of manhood. To get you started, try something like "Woo, she was nasty, I can't believe what freaky shit she let you do. And nasty...that girl was screaming STD." Continue like that. One final tradition is that everyone loves a guy who takes his pants off to both the chicken dance and the hokey pokey. If you follow these simple rules, you'll have everyone at the wedding talking. Have fun.

-Skatter

Shawn Skatter is a licensed balloon animal maker in the lower 48 states. He likes cuddling by the fire and long romantic walks on the beach. He's a Gemini and is most compatible with a Virgo. He can be reached at themeforajackall@hotmail.com.

An Open Letter to the Concert Going Community

Dear Fellow Live Music Enthusiasts:

This letter is intended to address some serious issues jeopardizing the full on show experience. It is intended to instruct, not offend.

1. Don't be that guy! Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to wear the T-shirt of the band they are going to see unless they are over 35 and the shirt is at least 15 years old. If Glen, (age 37) is going to see Rush and is wearing a 1982 European tour baseball jersey, it is annoying but acceptable. If Josh, (age 22) is going to see Warped and wearing a 1996 Mighty Mighty Bosstones "Impression That I Get" tee, it's a no go. He doesn't have the time frame right. Josh is 13 years away from the right to be that guy.
2. Don't wear sandals! You're going to be in a dark place with lots of people that don't want to see your feet and could care less if you break a few digits.
3. Keep your shirt on! It's always the guy with man boobs and a hairy back that has to take it off. He stinks and sweats profusely. Spare your fellow audience members. Remember, the folks with really good bodies don't usually publicly display them for free.
4. Don't bitch about the average Fireside, Metro or VFW Hall ticket price. It's \$9.00 to see a movie in metropolitan Chicago now. \$10.00 for your average awesome show is a steal.
5. Do bitch about your stadium show. Your getting had from your \$4.00 Coke, to your parking fee to park in Their Lot on Their Land, to the sheer lack of respect shown to the average attendee. Don't pay, don't go and don't participate. Who's worth \$50.00 if a real orgasm isn't involved?
6. Expect second-hand smoke. This isn't Red Lobster. Even your wheezing asthmatic knows that rock 'n roll is smoky and supposed to be that way.
7. Heckle the cigar and clove smokers. It's supposed to be smoky, not hickory smoked, and ham only smells good on Easter.
8. Let the crowd surfers drop. It is not your responsibility to break your fingers while some jumbo dork decides they just have to imitate Eddie Vedder in that video they really love. Let them fall. It's not cool and a summer in a back-brace will add character.
9. If you are going to partake in the above activity, and you are female, prepare to be groped, fingered and otherwise violated. This is definitely a situation where you are putting yourself at risk. If you don't want Mongo copping a feel, don't get up there. And if you do get up there, no crying. You know what to expect. It's not PC to state this fact, but the truth is the truth.
10. Take whatever flier is being handed out. Some poor schmuck is out there hustling for his band, her show, their project, etc. What's the harm? You can always tape over the cassette, use the scratch paper, or later nonchalantly comment on the big show everyone is going to that you only found out about because some kid handed you a flier.
11. There is never going to be toilet paper. Expect to drip dry.
12. There is nothing wrong with getting dropped-off in a mini van. If you are getting dropped-off in said soccer mom limo, you are prohibited from trying to act cool. Accept your innate dork quotient and get on with your Algebra homework.

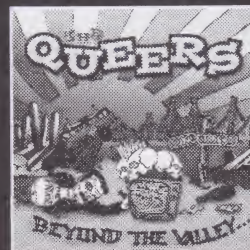
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It's All In Your Head

By an anonymous delegate of the Chicago scene

The concept of being signed on a major label is seemingly the end-all, be-all existence of most striving rock and roll bands. It's just a crime when major labels blindly pick up new bands without truly considering their worth. Two such local bands, Showoff and Mest have been fed the silver spoon by Maverick and been courted by the Madonna-owned major for the past year. Showoff has released their subsequent major label debut and Mest awaits the release of theirs. The ironic luxuries that accompany the "rock and roll lifestyle" were flashed before my eyes on a warm March evening at Metro as Chris Envy, front-man from Showoff, pulled up in what seemed to be a brand new Chevy Camaro. Life is good, eh? The great irony that accompanies the privileged rock and roll lifestyle was self-evident on March 7, 2000 when the used-to-be-punk locals Showoff and Mest were showcased at Metro.

If you're like myself, the phenomena known as Mest is literally non-existent unless of course you're native to the Chicago South Shore area where these young lads hail from. Who would have thought such humble beginnings with a smog-induced view of Lake Michigan would spawn the latest sparkle in Maverick Records collective eyes? Surely, not I. I do recall a very sultry and stale June evening in 1998 when I had the misfortune of first being introduced to Mest's all so unoriginal brand of Southern California rip-off rock, when somehow they got added onto the Mad Caddies/Homegrown show at the Fireside Bowl. It was amusing watching them prance around on stage as they donned some sort of lame, scripted southern California punk rock dress code that was a cross between skate-core and mall trash. Their songs were so generic and forgettable it was no use trying to discern the obvious influences. The band certainly had that youthful exuberance that can easily be dismissed as cockiness and you could sense that the strong aura of overconfidence amongst themselves that had gone to their heads. It was obvious that everyone else at the Fireside then, just like me, had never previously heard of Mest, nor did they care. They supposedly released one full-length CD on their own, and it must have obviously been good enough for Maverick because they couldn't have been impressed with their inability to promote themselves and play out a lot.

Therefore, it is a great mystery how a band rises from such obscurity into major label acclaim in no time. I hardly remember seeing Mest playing anywhere else around Chicago in the past year or so and neither do you. On March 7 at Metro it was obvious that little had changed for Mest. They were up to the same stupid antics as a large inflatable penis adorned the back of the stage to signify their truly punk rock demeanor I suppose. Their lack of class was typified when the front-man proceeded to send a tasteless dedication to who he described as "all the girls he's had sex with." I'm sure all those lovely ladies out there were truly honored. It's definitely a shame that all the luxuries of being a major label band have only brought Mest an elevated sense of stupid teenage humor and a large inflatable cock.

It must have been pure genius behind the fact that Mest played immediately before Showoff because it allowed the mostly under fifteen jail-bait crowd to be numbed and realize that Mest and Showoff possess the same tiring, yet glossy pop-punk songwriting formula. Or did the ploy work the other way? Did it only enable the audience to become more enamored by the disillusion that Mest and Showoff are in fact the same entity, but with different members. The Villa Park natives known as Showoff took the stage sure to impress the packed to the gills crowd that seemingly consisted of a bizarre smattering of young teenage girls, brute frat guys, and everything in between.

Once again, excuse me as I reminisce, but there was a time not too long ago, circa 1998, when I had the great misfortune of seeing the beloved Showoff at the suburban landmark, Grand Avenue School in Western Springs, in front of no more than 20 people. This was obviously before Showoff had the capacity to "sellout" larger venues with tons of underage girls. I cannot forget the annoying aura of overconfidence these four guys possessed as they waltzed into the show that night. It was as if they were trying too hard to prove how "punk rock" they truly were by paying a few last dues to the underground scene of the Chicago area before they signed to a major and seemingly disowned the punk rock roots that established them to some extent. And I can't quite shake the repulsive image of bass player Dave Envy having the gall to drop his pants in front of the Grand Avenue crowd two years ago. Once again, a true definition of class on behalf of these gentlemen supported by a major label. Was Dave Envy perhaps polishing his soon to be needed rock star image or simply acting like an idiot? After this particular show I think we both know the answer.

So after endless cameos in such glossy publications as SPIN and Guitar Player it's sure that the good life has certainly blessed Showoff. Though the hype is sure to fade. Showoff struggled all night to show maturity as a band that rose from their meager punk roots in the Chicago scene. They defined themselves as a promising pop/punk band with somewhat catchy songs - no more, no less. They embellish in the simple songwriting formula that has made one-hit wonders flourish for years, but honestly for Showoff the routine gets old fast and originality is lacking.

This column is by no means a vehicle to disparage the gentlemen in Showoff and Mest. This column is by no means a vehicle to express any petty feelings of jealousy towards the aforementioned bands for getting a lucky break. This column is perhaps a means to exemplify and exploit the subtle realities that embody the politics that surround newly acquired acts to major labels. If signing bands like Showoff and Mest is the path that major labels such as Maverick is going to assume in the future it's a damn shame because the music is tasteless. It's making me bitter that more deserving acts that spend every waking moment relentlessly playing and releasing music DIY get no credit whatsoever. They are ultimately overshadowed by homogenized trash that is dismissed as quality music. The major label record industry is a savage and ambiguous beast that can evidently turn crude, class-less punks into greedy, proud people - and it must be stopped.

Photo Page



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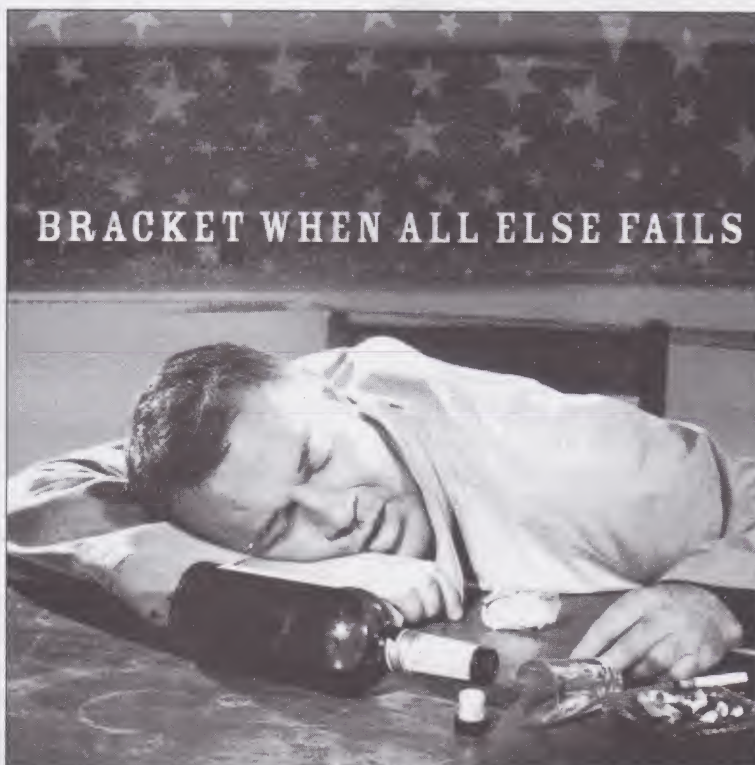
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COMING DOWN FROM



By Pete Kourim

*I'm only getting older and my date accuracy for some of this might be way off. Read on!

A QUICK PRIMER

Much like Jake Austen's Rocktober tribute to KISS, (called the "Kissue", which I might add is incredible reading from both a historic and entertainment standpoint) I will clue all the non-KISS aficionados out there about what I'm talking about with a little KISS 101 history lesson. But I will be far more blunt and cynical. Here it is: two guys name Stanley and Chaim meet, anglicize their names to Paul and Gene, and start a band called "Wicked Lester." Despite getting signed to a major label, the band dissolves, leaving the two to make a new group. A guy named Paul, (his real name) wears two different color Chuck Taylors to a guitar audition and gets the job, but has to change his name to Ace because there is already a Paul in the group, even though Paul's real name was Stanley. Peter the drummer meets the group through a "wanted" ad, and forgets to mention his small-man syndrome and drinking problem. The band is formed, and KISS is chosen for the name. The band gets into wearing leather and makeup on stage. Goofy stunts like breathing fire and spitting streams of blood surround super-loud amps. They record a really hard demo with producer extraordinaire Eddie Kramer, but when they get signed to the fledgling Casablanca label, their recordings are produced to be about as vicious as the 1910 Fruit Gum Company. An infamous live double album soars them into superstardom, and future recordings, (two of them produced by the aforementioned Kramer) start to sound like the band has a pair. This is all followed up by another live record, a greatest hits release, (they only had one #1 single, the paltry "Beth") four solo albums, and lots of really cheesy merchandise. By this point, the dividing line on KISS is very exact: either you think they're greatest rock band of all time, or you think they're biggest bunch of over-merchandised clowns since the Monkees. Millions of records and tons of posters, dart games, toy cars, pinball machines, plastic guitars, and action figures later, the original lineup felt the weight of its own excess, (punk and new wave probably weren't helping, either) and the group was eventually disbanded in the early 1980's. For this article, that's all anyone needs to know, as the group went on to such embarrassments as teaming up with Lou Reed, having a guy with an ankh on his face, spandex pants and leopard-print guitars, and ick, the list goes on...

THE EARLY KISS

"KISS...that's their name!

KISS...they may look insane!

KISS...if rock's your game,

It's KISS!"

...Or something like that. It was the commercial for KISS dolls in the late 1970's blaring through my family's TV in between after school cartoons. They weren't the best made or best looking toys, but I was sold on them, and by Christmas of that year, I would have scored two of them, (Gene and Paul). I never did get the other two.

My apparently huge obsession with KISS certainly didn't start there, though. The commercials were running around 1978 or 1979, when I was in second or third grade, (you do the math) but I had been listening to the band for about two years already, (yep, around the summer between kindergarten and first grade). One of my first sightings of the group was on a variety special with Paul Lynde on prime time TV. KISS rocked out a song, did a cheesy interview where Lynde asked what they looked like without makeup, (Gene Simmons replies that they aren't wearing any makeup to canned laughter, even at an early age I thought it wasn't funny and the interview sucked) and finished up with another number. I thought it was great. I knew I wanted to be in a band from that point forward. It was an early, simple revelation. It made perfect sense to me.

My next goal was to get my hands on some KISS records, which didn't seem to be an easy task since it wasn't like I had a job at age 7 and my folks probably wouldn't agree with my plan to buy up the whole KISS discography. Luck would have it that I was to have a future brother-in-law who was also a huge KISS fan, and let me borrow his entire KISS LP collection to tape, (to eight track, of course). I kept them for a long time, listening to the records a lot before finally taping them. Months later I got a call from the brother-in-law-to-be that he had just got all the KISS records on eight-track, so he didn't even want the records back, and said I could keep them. After all, why would he need them on the outdated LP format when the eight-tracks were at his disposal? At the time it make good sense; I would've actually preferred eight-track over LP at the time. They really had the country fooled, much like the successful industry takeover of the compact disc back in the early

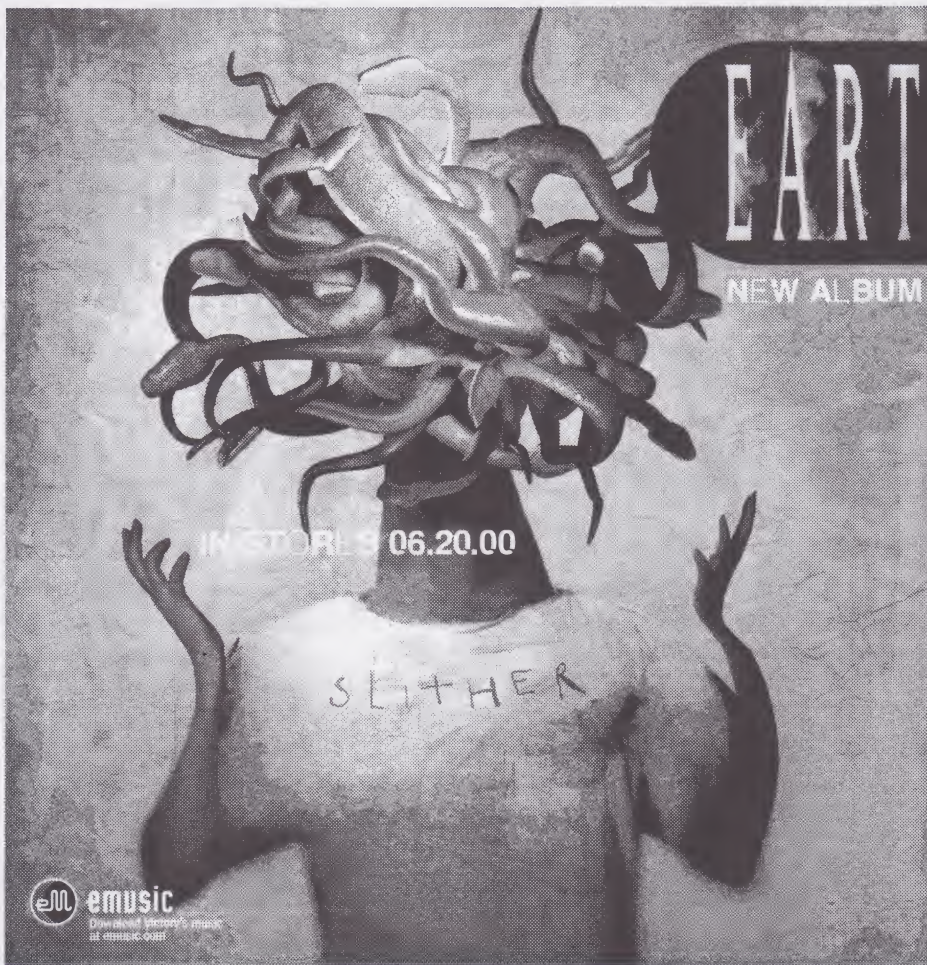
1990's. With a blunt end to the story, the wedding was eventually called off, and in a small victory, I had just scored all the KISS records, which continued to get worn out on a small Sears portable turntable. In the summer of 1978, I got the new album (Love Gun) for my birthday, which was followed in time with Double Platinum and Alive II, (Alive II was on eight-track, yes! Even though the first tape got chewed up instantly, I didn't care). When NBC aired the "Kiss Meets The Phantom Of The Park" debacle, I thought it was one of the coolest things I would ever see, not knowing that the movie, among many other things, would eventually sober me up, too. I didn't get any of the solo albums, as I felt something weird was happening with the group. In fact, besides eventually getting all the records I already owned on CD, I didn't buy another KISS record for almost twenty years. The "non-makeup" era of KISS had been illegitimate in my eyes for a long time; now I can tolerate some of it, but none of it matched their late 1970's swagger. That small 6-year period of KISS is where I base the obsession. I bought music books of the songs, banged them out on guitar and piano, went as Gene Simmons for Halloween in grade school, collected the trading cards, clipped articles where I could, and still played the worn-out records. It was pure happiness, really.

THE TRIBUTE

One of the most bizarre aspects of the obsession was starting an equally bizarre tribute band to KISS. In 1994 or so, I experienced a major burnout on local and national punk rock. Groups like Green Day, who were playing capacities of 500 or so at McGregors, were already becoming parts of "package tours" and were only months away from playing venues like the United Center. Most local shows were still fun, but after immersing myself in Chicagoland punk on an almost 24 hour basis, I did sense a bit of tediousness. I also thought how funny and easy it was to play old metal albums and aggravate many "callous" punk rockers. Among these disillusionment's, I started to go back to playing the old KISS. The songs were still pretty good; the tone of the 70's overproduced guitar matched that of the underproduced, thin 90's punk guitar. And the notion of 50 foot drum risers and exploding guitars proved to give off a pleasant, humorous feeling compared to the "keeping it real" bands who only wore street clothes on stage, even though some probably spent hours deciding what T-shirt to wear. With KISS strongly reseeded in my mind, I went on the first Oblivion tour with Chuck Uchida, who besides recording our album, (and everything else, for that matter) and doing merchandise duties, was also a huge KISS fan. Tribute bands were cropping up all over Chicago, and on long drives through the East Coast, Brian, Chuck and I laughed about having a KISS tribute band. How fun it would be to plow through the songs, all in makeup, and get a little diversion from punk rock. By the tour's end we were pretty serious, (cynicism from a punk tour might have fueled it) and recruited Doug Ward to play, who was in between bands at the time. Doug was easily the KISS neophyte, but after a few videos and unlimited use of the live records, seemed to be the most psyched and easily the most theatrical as Paul Stanley. Chuck's guitar playing was a shoe in for Ace Frehley, and Brian rounded out the Peter Criss drumming while I took on the Gene Simmons role. We dubbed ourselves "KISSS" (with three "S"'s, and was all too often mispronounced as "KIZZ" or "KISSES") and instead of hitting bars like most tributes, we played the same all ages circuit that we knew and loved. The KISSS debut was in Homewood at Off The Alley, with Oblivion, (the only time Oblivion and KISSS played together, I almost died) Lunkhead in their last show, (of course, it wasn't) The Smoothies and Stampy. Off The Alley turned on the flashing lights and everything, and I spit Hawaiian Punch instead of blood, (I eventually moved on to blood capsules and then a large bottle of mint-flavored fake blood that I scored from Julie at Underdog). I think the bands got the biggest kick out of it, since most of them had the actual albums and knew the "classic" KISS by heart. We played three more times at the Fireside Bowl and never performed again, as Doug bowed out to do other things, (Rich of I Love Rich fame has volunteered to be the new Paul, and as obvious of a winner that would be, we never did get it together). After two of those shows, I went about town to parties, still in the makeup. If you made it to any of these shows, you know what it was about. The last two shows had really great turnouts, despite the fact that our lousy, cheesy tribute band was headlining. At our last show we gained the praise of Rev. Norb, whom we played with as Boris The Sprinkler was on the bill. Almost as quickly as KISSS was conceived, it was gone, just about the same time for the real KISS to announce their reunion and start playing dates, of which our tribute attended in Chicago. It was my first and only time to really see the group, (I couldn't make to the 1978 show like I wanted to). And it marked another sobering period for me as I watched one of my favorite bands of all time hobble up to the stage and pull off a slightly slowed down revival of their tunes. Ace only fell once.

COMING DOWN?

Well, Bill has warned me not to get too lengthy with this article, so I'll try not to go too far off the deep end. Suffice it to say that a recent overindulgence of KISS, courtesy of the Internet, has made me take a step back and see the group from a more flawed, human standpoint. Seeing the guys live with their glory days behind them didn't hurt. Also, thanks to www.kissvault.com and Ebay, it is quite easy to score all things KISS, especially old videos and bootlegs burned to CD, archiving what was originally thought to be rock and roll greatness. And as good as the songs were, you can't help but laugh at Paul Stanley's words, straight from the mouth of the hard rock clown himself. His obsession with the weather at the time to introduce songs, (having a cock-rock vocal shouting out "Y'know, it's getting so hot outside or it's getting so cold, we've got all these temperature changes!" with the crowd screaming feverishly after it). Or telling the crowd to loosen up, asking them if they like getting stoned, or seeing who's sixteen in the crowd. There's enough "Stanleyisms" out there that I'm trying to talk Jaded In Chicago into pressing a flexi-disc of all the ones I can put together, all for you wonderful people who read the rag. There's also Peter Criss, chewing away on his gum during the whole show like a cow and its cud. Gene Simmons hanging out his tongue every moment he can, and his weak, weak, weak one note bass solo while spitting out all his blood. Ace has stayed pretty much the same, head down, needling away at the guitar, more power to him. All these elements certainly humanize the group, changing them from 70's icons to the class clowns of my high school study hall days. It's alright to get disillusioned, I guess. The music is still there, just that these one in a million goons got real lucky. Well, I still went and shelled out for really good tickets for the farewell tour. Will the humorous, more farcical vision of KISS prevail that night? Who knows? Who cares? Hey, sweater boys, pick up a copy of "Hotter Than Hell" or "Dressed To Kill," it sounds just like Promise Ring. Really. Trust me. I'm hoping my next piece of drivel will be about the history of Soul Train, since I'm aware that many of the boys out there are already pleasuring themselves to the show right now. I'm still taking comments at pete-o@juno.com.



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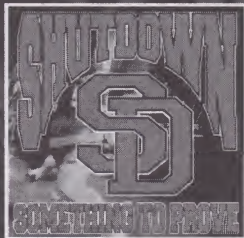


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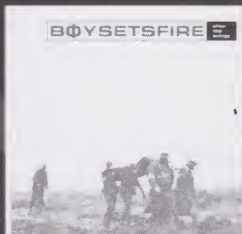
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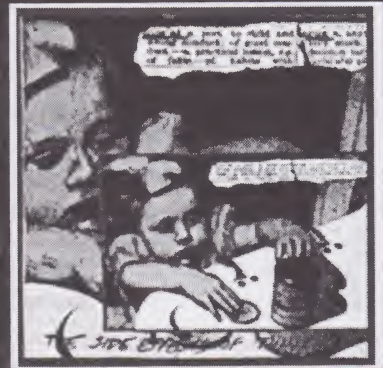
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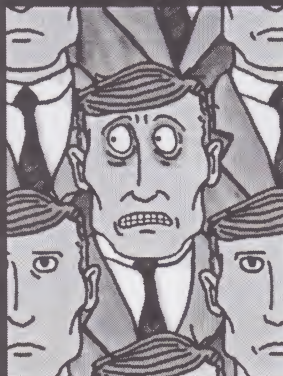
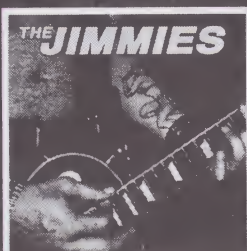
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THE HONOR SYSTEM



Chicago's Honor System has been playing shows locally for the past year or so and has since managed to assemble a solid fan-base. They recently completed a West Coast tour with hometown favorites Alkaline Trio, and also just released their debut LP, entitled "Single File" on Asian Man Records. I met-up with singer/guitarist Dan Hanaway at their record release show and discussed all the recent Honor System news.

Thanks again for the interview Dan.

JIC-Besides you and Rob, who were in the Broadways, what other guys make-up the band?

Dan-Nolan plays guitar and Chris plays bass, and I don't know if you want a history of them, but...Nolan played with Digger for a while and I just met him a couple years ago. Rob and Chris actually worked together at a picture-framing place and Chris is from Springfield. That's the history...that's our bio, (laughs).

JIC-How'd the "Single File" LP come to be released on Asian Man Records?

Dan-Mike Park basically called me when he found out from Alkaline Trio that we were starting a new band, and he just asked if we wanted him to work for us, and we said "Hell yeah." I wouldn't want anyone else. We've known him forever, so I guess we're kind of spoiled like that.

JIC-It seems to me like both the album title, "Single File," and the band's name kind of go along with a theme that's often found inside your lyrics...that being the whole worker's struggle-type thing. Do you at all agree with what I'm saying here?

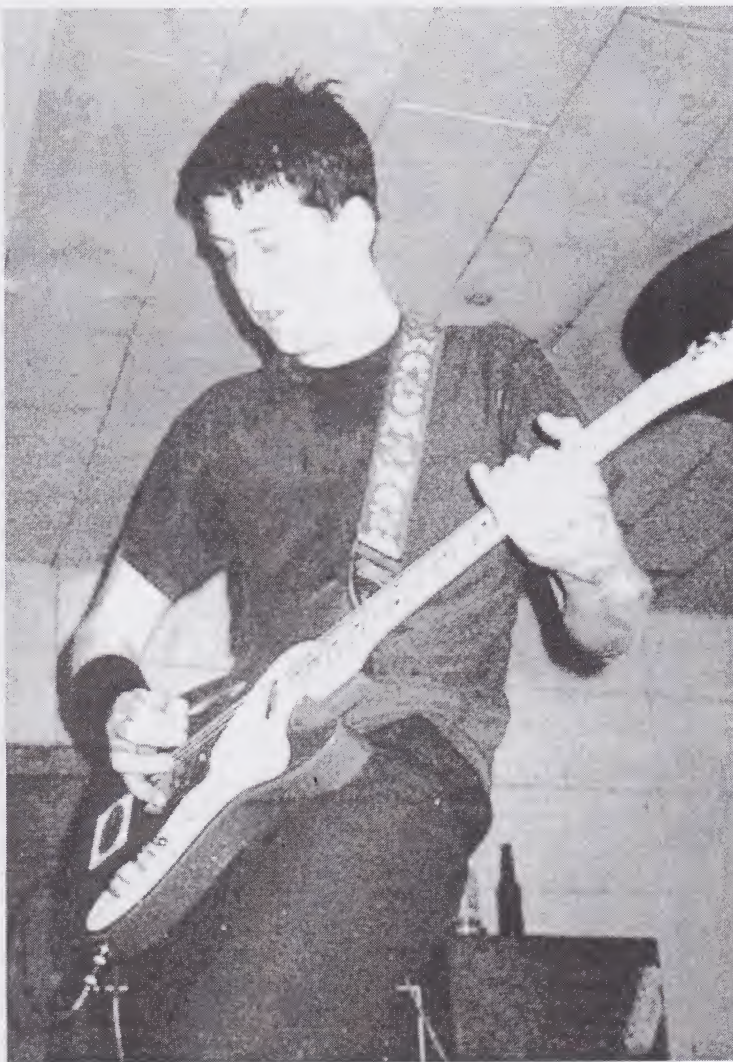
Dan-It's definitely...pretty much a lot of my songs have the same common themes, and the band name and the album name definitely relate to that. It's not like I was sitting there trying to plan it out, especially like the band name; it took us a long time and we couldn't really think of anything and that just popped-up and we were like "Oh that's cool," cause it kind of fits. There's really nothing that well thought-out with the name, but it just happens to fit. Actually...the "Single File" name came from our three-song demo tape; it was the title of a song that our old bass player wrote. We wanted the album to have some simple name, so we just chose that, and we asked him (the old bass player) if it was alright and he was totally down with having it like that.

JIC-What other things inspire you when you're writing lyrics?

Dan-Basically just observations of what's going on in my life and around my life. It's not rocket science; it's basically my thoughts and feelings on different matters. I try to make the lyrics pretty meaningful, I don't try to write about...really I don't have anything to write about love or anything. I try to impact other people with my writing like people have impacted me. That's why I got into punk rock in the first place, and I feel like it changed my life and my ideals. If I could do that to anyone that'd be amazing. Plus it's just what I see, and I really don't know any other way to write besides the way we do.

JIC-I've heard a lot of people compare you guys to Jawbreaker and Alkaline Trio; I actually think you've got a really unique sound, but what do you think about people maybe making such comparisons?

Dan-Jawbreaker came from the vein of music...there was a lot of bands before Jawbreaker that sounded like Jawbreaker as well. I'm definitely influenced very much by Jawbreaker; they're one of my favorite bands of all time. It's easy for people to make that comparison when they've only heard you a few times too; I think as you evolve as a band and people listen to you more, then they don't make those kind of comparisons. As far as the Alkaline Trio thing...I don't see that at all, but let's say there's a kid who's only seen Alkaline Trio and a couple ska bands, then of course he's going to say that we sound like them. It doesn't bother me...as long as people don't compare us to some white-power group or something, then I don't really care. I think you're going to sound like what influences you; I don't make it a point to rip-off anybody's music, but if it happens to sound like it then so be it.



JIC-I really like the production on this new record...Is it always cool recording with Matt Allison?

Dan-Yeah, Matt is great. He's basically re-born, and I don't mean re-born Christian, he's got his act together now more than it's ever been. He's so into recording bands. I was just talking to him and he said one day that he finally realized he was privileged in getting to record for a living cause it's what he really loves to do. It just hit him and he puts so much more work into it than he ever has before. There'd be nights when we'd be in the studio and we'd be ready to go home, and just sleeping on his floor and stuff and he'd be like, "No...no...we've got to still do this and that, etc." He helped out immeasurably; he's an amazing man.

JIC-What's going on with the "Plea for Peace" tour you're doing this summer?

Dan-I don't know what's going on with it...I have nothing to do with booking it, like we're playing about twenty minutes every night, like really early in the set. We're going to do whatever, whatever they set-up we're going to play. I don't have a clue about it; I know it's going to be a benefit tour and hopefully it'll draw enough people to actually benefit something. As far as like the small details, I really don't know much about it. It's still kind of up in the air; it's really hectic cause there are a lot of bands to book. It's hard to find clubs that want to do that many bands and still be able to make enough money to call it a benefit. I know we're taking like five bucks a day each or something, just to live on the road, cause I really want it to be a good thing. It's going to be a great thing though; Mike Park knows what he's doing. He does things in odd ways, but he gets them done.

JIC-I remember talking with you one time about how you weren't like trying to make a living off this band and how you don't even want to sell t-shirts or whatever...If you at all remember what I'm talking about can you elaborate a little?

Dan-Yeah...I'm not doing this to make money, you have to make money to live, and obviously if we're going to be touring full-time then we're going to need enough money to come home and pay our rent. Right now though between the tours we all work day-jobs, or night-jobs depending on who you ask. A couple of the guys work here at Fireside, I work at a theatre lighting rental company where I go out and hang lights or just drive around in a truck all day...It's kind of stupid. I think you can make a comfortable living if you just work hard at being a band. I don't like when you see bands with basketball jerseys and shit, then it's like more people are coming to the show thinking it's the mall instead of actually coming to see music. The shirts definitely help...I mean like when we're on the road and nobody's heard of you it's tough, but if somebody buys a shirt and a CD then that helps a lot. I just think it should be more about the music.

JIC-Final comments?

Dan-Yeah...you should put an ad in your zine for the bookstore that's down the street cause it's awesome, my friend volunteers there. It's called the New World Resource Center; it's right down the street from the Fireside, and it's got lots of cool stuff. It's on the same side of the street, just a block east; hundreds of punk rockers walk by there every week...they should all check it out. A lot of older socialist party members and a lot of older activists go in there, but I think a lot of younger kids could really benefit from it. Especially a lot of kids from the suburbs, I grew up in the suburbs too, and there's not a lot of alternative bookstores where you can really learn where to focus your energy. It's a really positive place and everybody should check it out.

Needless to say, I really think you ought to give the Honor System a listen if you already haven't. I've practically listened to their record every day since I got it and it just continues to grow on me. Rob's one of the best punk drummers around and the guitar-work on this is so intricate that it's just amazing. Their music really has an original and addicting twist...I love it. You can contact the Honor System at 1719 W. Albion St/Chicago, IL/60626 or ccarr64719@aol.com.



Music Reviews

Against All Authority/24 Hour Roadside Resistance/Hopeless Records

I found this album to be surprisingly good, much better than their first Hopeless LP from a few years back. The instrumentation, production and songwriting are also far superior to anything this band has ever previously done. I still don't really like this disc though; to me this band sounds like they're trying too hard to be angry, and their politically-driven lyrics don't seem to do it for me either...the words are pretty unintelligent and that just makes the songs come-off kind of cliched and insincere. Their horn players don't play too much either, but their musicianship has also improved along with the rest of the bands', and the ska/punk type of songs that they're featured on are surely the ones that I find more tolerable on this record. So...if you already like this band then my guess is that you'll like this; it's just that I find most of these songs to be too snotty and obnoxious, with lyrics I hardly find motivating enough to want to sing-along to.

Alkaline Trio/Maybe I'll Catch Fire/Asian Man Records

Reviewing an album that's this good isn't going to be easy...I'm starting to hear this band often referred to as the "Modern-day Jawbreaker," and as bold as that statement is, I think it's safe to say that it's true. With every release this band improves and develops their sound, and after listening to this album relentlessly over the past couple months, I think it's easily my favorite release that this band's ever done. Danny sings three songs, all of which are amazing, and the last song, "Radio," just might be Alk3's best song of all time. These guys are ridiculously popular in Chicago, and that I think it's only a matter of time before they conquer the entire nation. Buy this album, go see 'em play live, and I guarantee you'll be a very happy kid.

Allister/Dead Ends and Girlfriends/Drive-Thru Records

Wimpy pop punk with really silly and stupid lyrics...these guys are actually fairly tight and catchy, but just way too unoriginal. The dopey love song thing gets really repetitive after a couple songs too. It's weird how this band is from the Chicagoland area but never play around here, like most everyone is totally unfamiliar with them, yet they're somehow signed to a label from southern California; go figure. The only redeeming part of this album is a hilariously fun cover tune of the Backstreet Boys' "I Want It That Way."

The Anniversary/Designing a Nervous Breakdown/Heroes & Villains

Total pop/rock keyboard-core stuff...really long songs too. Certain tracks are a lot better than others are, but I guess that's expected with debut records, though "All Things Ordinary" has to be the best song. Good vocal harmonies throughout and interesting and unique song structures too. Only recommended if you're really into pop music since a lot of this really drags and isn't all that catchy.

Big D and the Kidstable/Good Luck/Asian Man Records

Probably the best ska/punk album released in the past two years; "Good Luck" offers 14 tracks of punchy, fun ska. This band's musicianship is top-notch too. "G.L.D." has to be my favorite one on the record. I've heard these guys are quite a live act, so you ought to check them out the next time they come to town.

Bracket/When All Else Fails/Fat Wreck Chords

Guitar-driven pop punk, with an emphasis on the pop, mid-tempo, long songs, pretty boring. This record is nothing you haven't heard before, lame lyrics and vocals, and kind of a lack of catchiness this time around from the Bracket boys. Previous fans of the band should pick this up, but not anybody else.

Darlington & Huntingtons/Split CD/Melted Records

I'd always heard a lot of positive things about Darlington, but I was really disappointed upon first hearing them. They're a lot more raw and aggressive than I thought they'd be; their style of pop punk is just something that I can't really go for. The Huntingtons' songs are all pretty rockin', the problem is that this band is a virtual clone of the Ramones; they're far too generic for me. If you were a huge pop punk fan you'd like this, otherwise this'd probably be a nightmare for you.

Digger/Monte Carlo/Hopeless Records

Unfortunately I don't think this band will ever surpass their debut album "Powerbait," but this record comes pretty close. It blends the poppy fun of their first record with the mature and intricate sounds from their second LP. Most of the good songs are placed towards the beginning of this disc, which kind of fades as it approaches the end...but all things considered, this is still easily a good buy.

The Dwarves/Come Clean/Epitaph

The Dwarves are one of those old school punk bands that you're either a huge fan of or that you don't like at all. I don't like the Dwarves at all. I do however very much like the cover of this album, (if you've seen it you know what I'm talking about). Aside from that I don't like anything about this record; it really sucks.

The Eyeliners/Here Comes Trouble/Panic Button Records

Imagine the Donnas but about 100 times better. This all-female pop punk group writes some songs that are fun and catchy as hell, 14 hook-filled, rockin' tunes in all from these Albuquerque girls. For whatever reason I never really liked female singers, so I can't really get into this, but if you do, or if you like bands like the Donnas, then I guarantee that you'd love this release.

Music Reviews

The Frustrators/Bored in the USA CDep/Adeline Records

Eight-song debut from this melodic punk band who features members of Waterdog and Green Day, (Mike Dirnt). I love the second song, and the Blondie cover, but aside from those two, this disc is no good. Some of the songs remind me of a really bad version of ALL, and that's bad. Not really a good buy unless you're a psycho Green Day fan or something.

Gameface & Errortype: 11/Split CDep/Revelation Records

Gameface has always reminded me of a punk rock version of the Gin Blossoms...I don't really know if that's a good or bad thing, but I always thought they were a poppy punk band with a really talented vocalist. Their songs here are just okay; way too long and a bit cluttered, just not their best stuff...although the song "How Far is Goodbye?" is pretty darn good and almost alone makes this CD worth buying.

Errortype: 11 is a fairly popular post-hardcore band whose contributions to this disc are bit less than impressive; they sound exactly like what a lot of other bands are trying to do these days. I was expecting much more from Gameface, stuff more akin to their latest album "Every Last Time," but I was really displeased by their songs, (except the first tune) and by this entire split as well.

Grey Area/Fanbelt Algebra/Victory Records

Probably my favorite Victory Records band, Grey Area consistently delivers catchy and sincere punk tunes with a definite feel of uniqueness. This record is much improved from their 1998 debut and well-worth purchasing. The first song, "Reminder" is one of the best all-around songs I've heard all year; it's definitely the standout track, although I really like this entire disc. "Fanbelt Algebra" is a smart buy indeed!

Groovie Ghoulies/Travels with My Amp/Lookout Records

Head-bopping punk rock 'n roll that's heavily-influenced by the Ramones...I'm sure you're all familiar with the Ghoulies' formula. Things haven't changed on this record, stylistically speaking, but this band has managed to create their most fun and rockin' album to date. This is a great CD to listen to with a bunch of friends while driving around in your car. Guaranteed that almost any fan of pop punk would enjoy this.

The John Brown Battery/Is Jinxed/He Who Corrupts

John Brown Battery is a local emo/punk band who's definitely moving forward; they're constantly playing shows and have begun to develop a decent-sized fan-base. Imagine a more experimental Hot Water Music with a Chicago-styled punk edge, and you've got something close to John Brown Battery. Don't be afraid to check out this local act as soon as you can. He Who Corrupts/196 Fairfield/Elmhurst, IL/60126.

The Jimmies/Let the Fat Men Plunder/Panic Button Records

This is the second full-length record by the Oregon punk rock quartet known as the Jimmies. These guys play a melodic punk with definite Ramones and Social Distortion influences. There's also a rock 'n roll edge to this LP, and overall it's kind of got an old school sound going on. I like this okay; seems like an album for older fans of punk rock rather than the kiddies.

The Judas Factor/Kiss Suicide CDep/Revelation Records

Heavy and powerful hardcore with a definite bit of originality. This record is really hard, but at the same time very artistic; tons of tempo changes, a bit of an emo influence and I even think I hear some electronic beats on one of the tracks. I imagine this band would be awesome live; I'm just not tough enough to want to listen to something this chaotic while I'm sitting in my bedroom...however I bet a lot of you adventurous music fans out there could really go for this.

Lando's 45/The End CDep/Harmless Records

Lando's 45 is my favorite band to see live. This CD is one of my favorite things to listen to. I don't know what else to say. Daryl and company play some of the best punk rock that's around today and if you're not already a fan of this band then you've definitely got some catching up to do. Buy this now!

The Lawrence Arms/Ghost Stories/Asian Man Records

This is the record that I'm going to be listening to all summer long. "Ghost Stories" is much better than this Chicago punk trio's debut disc, from both the production and songwriting standpoints. Best two songs have to be "Here Comes the Neighborhood" and "Light Breathing." The Lawrence Arms is easily one of the best bands in this city; you'd have to be nuts not to pick up this CD.

Link 80/The Struggle Continues.../Asian Man Records

Link 80 isn't really my cup of tea, and I much preferred their old singer Nick to the new guy they've got now. This release is definitely harder-edged compared to their older material, though it seems like the band's gotten a lot better with their songwriting and playing abilities. Those of you who are fans of more aggressive-styled punk/ska would probably like this album.

Moral Crux/The Side Effects of Thinking/Panic Button Records

Good album title and a good album too. This was originally recorded in the late '80s, and just recently re-released by Panic Button. Compared to the other Moral Crux stuff that I've heard this is by far my favorite; this record is filled with energy and totally has that youthful, angst-filled, '80s circle pit-type spirit about it. This release is surprisingly good, and also one that certainly most fans of punk rock could appreciate.

Music Reviews

Nerf Herder/How To Meet Girls/Honest Don's

Nerf Herder are easily the best nerd-core band ever, their lyrics and songwriting are so indescribably clever and funny that I really don't think I could live without this record. I always listen to this when I drive and it totally makes me feel like I'm cruising the streets of some warm and sunny oceanfront California town. "Vivian," "Feeling Bad," "Courtney" and "Pantera Fans In Love" are all classics.

Nobodys & the Beautys/Split CDep/Sub City

Two horrible bands on one horrible CD...I've disliked the Nobodys from day one and found no reason on this record to start liking them. And the Beautys...I can't even fathom that Hopeless/Sub City would release a recording by this band; they're so shitty I don't want to even waste space describing what they sound like. Two good things about this disc: a portion of the proceeds benefit the Diana Price Fish Foundation, (which deals with cancer patients) and the cover art is a tribute to the Queens x-drummer Hugh, who recently and sadly past away. Hopeless/Sub City is truly my favorite record label in the whole world, but I just have to be in honest in saying that this record completely blows.

One Man Army/Last Word Spoken/Adeline Records

Adeline's pride and joy, One Man Army, are back with their second full-length. Far superior to their first album in every way, "Last Word Spoken" is undoubtedly one of the best releases of the year. This poppy street punk band is one of my favorites and one you should check out immediately.

The Parasites/Compost/Go-Kart Records

This is a collection of 7" songs, B-sides, etc. from various points in the 1990s. Unfortunately the majority of these songs are poorly recorded, which really takes away from this release. Best song award has to go to the first track, entitled "Top Secret." Unless you're a huge Parasites fan, or you're like T. Chandler of Mutant Pop Records fame and you love nearly every pop punk band out there, you're not going to like this.

Plan A Project/Spirit of a Soldier/Go-Kart Records

I know this disc has been out for a while, but I just recently received it for review...so bite me. Ha. I was always curious to hear this band, and after doing so was a bit less than pleased with what I heard. Don't get me wrong, these guys aren't bad, but I had pretty high hopes for a band that I kept hearing be referred to as a modern-day cross between the Clash and Rancid. "Spirit of a Soldier" is definitely a strong debut; there are a number of good tunes that you can just tell are filled with youthful energy. The main problems are that there's too many tracks, (15 in total) and too many forgettable songs, and also the recording is a bit raw. If you're into bands like One Man Army or Ann Beretta you'd probably like this.

The Prescriptions/Why We Don't Rent to Women/Johanns Face Records

All-female indie rock that's filled with hooks, and talent-wise is really impressive. No way would I usually go for something like this, but every detail about this record, from its production to the quality of the songwriting, is damn good. These ten songs were recorded and produced by Grammy-nominated Dave Trumfio, and I'd recommend this album to any fan of indie rock and/or female vocalists. This band is already well on its way to making a name for itself.

Radon/Self-Titled/No Idea Records

I'm not quite sure how to describe this...there's definitely elements of rock, folk and pop all rolled-up into one. This three-piece has a really original sound, and they pull off their eclectic style-thing that they've got going on really well...recommended for fans of unique music or those looking to hear something totally new. Leave it to No Idea to produce another innovative and kick-ass record.

Reggie and the Full Effect/Promotional Copy/Heroes & Villains

This isn't as funny, or nearly as catchy as the first Reggie album, "Greatest Hits '84-'87." In fact, I really only like the first song on here; I was really hoping for a lot more from this. This band features members of the Get Up Kids, and they play really silly keyboard-driven pop songs. It's fun stuff, but this album is a disappointment compared to their classic debut record.

Shutdown/Something to Prove CDep/Victory Records

Youthful, energetic hardcore that incorporates both old and new school sounds. This is real fast, occasionally melodic, and fairly enjoyable hardcore from the East Coast; definitely much improved since their debut full-length on Victory. Three songs total, (minus a cheesy intro song). This band shows future promise and I can't wait to hear more from them.

Sloppy Seconds/Garbage Days Regurgitated EP/Nitro Records

Oh boy. I can't help but laugh aloud while writing this review; those of you familiar with this band understand why. Founders of the "junk rock" genre, Sloppy Seconds hail from the lovely state of Indiana, and play snot-pop styled punk rock with funny and offensive lyrics. This EP is comprised entirely of cover songs and features Joan Jett and Black Flag among others. This release will surely satisfy old Sloppy fans, and will most likely not win them many new ones.

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-Ghost Stories

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-Single File

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Last year Lookout Records released the best album they've done in quite a long time, "Rogue's March" by American Steel. Top-notch political lyrics and melodic, though very aggressive, punk rock is probably one of the best ways to describe this East Bay quartet. I spoke with Ryan and Ruairi, (both of who sing and play guitar) before a recent show of theirs at the Fireside Bowl. Apparently this band is huge in Berkeley, but when they played here in Chicago it was in front of about 50 people. That didn't stop American Steel from putting on one of the best shows I've seen all year, nor did they seem at all bothered by the meager crowd-size. In short, these guys are very talented and also very humble; it's only a matter of time before they receive the amount of attention and respect they deserve on the National level.

JIC-If someone asked you to describe your latest album, "Rogue's March," how would you do so?

Ryan-(Laughs). Dear Lord... What did I do this summer and why did I enjoy it, what? (Laughs).

Ruairi-I guess a safe description would be that it's probably more indicative of the music we were playing at the time, as opposed to other things we've put out which were less representative of what we were doing.

Ryan-In other words, the old stuff like tended to draw on really, really old songs, where as this new record is sort of more representative of what we're doing right now. The other good way to describe it is better than the old record. (Laughs).

JIC-What would you say are some of the other main differences between this album and your last full-length on New Disorder Records?

Ryan-That's pretty much the main difference; the old record had songs on it that were up to five or six years old when we recorded it. This one is all songs that we wrote between the old record and now, so maybe a year and a half-long period.

Ruairi-I think if you listen to the first record you can pick out about two thirds of the songs are way older than the other third. You can probably pick out which ones were more topical at the time. I always sort of considered it a really schizophrenic record; some of the stuff that was written closer to the recording period of time is obviously more serious musically, and I think you can safely say it was probably a little bit more serious lyrically also.

JIC-Would you say that there's a strong political presence behind your lyrics on the "Rogue's March" album?

Ruairi-Yeah, absolutely. I think if I was to pinpoint what's behind the lyrics you could say that they were sort of class politics. I think a lot of it is my own personal sorting through the American situation, through the medium of music or lyrics.

Ryan-I would let him field the political one. (Laughs).

JIC-How'd you guys ever meet-up with Lookout Records?

Ryan-It was sort of a happy coincidence, I mean we all live in the same town and know a lot of the same people. It was one of those things where we really couldn't avoid each other anymore.

Ruairi-I think that and I think Lookout was making a concerted effort to be representative of the East Bay scene again, and we were sort of the logical choice for that.

JIC-Do you feel out of place compared to the other bands on Lookout's current roster, or do you like kind of being one of the leaders in the label's effort to sign real punk bands again?

Ruairi-I think we're distinctly out of place musically.

Ryan-I don't think in an uncomfortable way necessarily.

Ruairi-I like all the people that are on Lookout, I like a lot of the bands that are on Lookout even. It's good in some sense to stand out like that on the roster, and then I think it could also be harmful in other ways, like if you were looking from a strategic point of view.

Ryan-What it comes down to is most of dealing with Lookout is dealing with the people there, and how we fit into their scene musically isn't really that relevant. It's mostly just like our personal interactions with them.

JIC-What's the situation with your (Ryan's) health?

Ryan-It's doing really well. This is about like the fifth and a half-week of our tour and I'm still plugging away at this. Basically when you have cancer they won't tell you that you're okay until you've been alive for five years. But I generally feel okay, and it's just sort of a matter of crossing fingers and counting years.

JIC-Does it get really old always being compared to certain bands, like Crimpshrine for example?

Ryan-Not really, cause most of the time when you're being compared to bands it's for the sake of people who don't know your music and you're trying to give them a reference point to sort of go, "Oh, maybe I want to hear them." I think once people listen to us...like we have our own distinctive style, but you have to give people a springboard and a context to understand where you're coming from.

Ruairi-Hopefully that'll diminish a little bit, but I think if one was to look on the bright side of that you could say that at least people were trying to describe us.

Ryan-And comparing us to bands that we don't despise. (Laughs).

JIC-Do you want to talk a little about some of the history of your band?



Ryan-It's been about five years now that we've been playing together. When it first started out it was basically Ruairi and I, and sort of a changing parade of early drummers, we all used to trade our instruments, we never just played one instrument. We started-off as a party band; it was just for kicks. We had a place we could rehearse and Ruairi and I had nothing to do.

Ruairi-In the true fashion of how East Bay bands start usually...

Ryan-There certainly was no ambition or anything like that, and then we got John to play bass and we got a real drummer. We started to take things kind of seriously, and then eventually that drummer didn't want to tour, so we got Scott on drums and ever since then it's been more of a serious thing since we started touring and actually putting out records.

JIC-How's the whole Gilman St. scene nowadays from your perspective, cause out here we just hear like the legends of Gilman and all that stuff...

Ryan-Which is always weird for us coming from the East Bay; it's weird why people are interested in the place where we go to see shows sometimes. I don't know...it's great, I still work there when I can and there's still a bunch of cool bands, it's our favorite place to play.

Ruairi-Yeah, absolutely. But I think from our perspective that whole heyday lore was sort of something that had become a liability and was something that was hard to get out from under. It sort of cast a shadow on any new thing that someone was trying to do. The one thing I would say on the positive side is that lately I've been seeing at our shows and some other shows too, a new generation of people out there who don't really revere the old days or the old bands, and that's a positive thing to me. They're into seeing new bands and even starting new bands that a couple years down the line might take their place, but also I would say that the bright spot on Gilman right now is the new generation of people there and their attitude. Not just in regards to the old days, cause they have nothing to do with it, but that they sort of have a more independent outlook. Even at our shows you'll see just a hodgepodge, it's just a motley crew, and I like that. And everyone is really polite and considerate. Maybe it's the way I'd like to see punk rock go, sort of see the nihilism toned-down a little bit. I think it's already dead, so we might as well admit it, and maybe see a little more independent, free-spirited, intellectual side of it.

JIC-That's interesting that you say that cause that's kind of how it is in Chicago right now, it seems like a rebuilding period. Shows are getting fun again; there's a lot of new kids and a lot of new bands. It's been really positive. Maybe it's like that Nation-wide or something...

Ruairi-Maybe so, maybe so. I think it's in the context with a lot of the new bands that are coming up nowadays.

JIC-Any future touring plans or plans for the summer?

Ryan-We're going to get home in a couple weeks and then after that we're going to take a little bit of a break because I have some medical shit to deal with. We're hoping to go back out in the beginning of July.

Ruairi-We'll do Canada and the states this summer and then this fall probably Europe.

For more info about American Steel go to www.lookoutrecords.com or write to P.O. Box 213/Berkeley, CA/94701. Thanks again to Dan at Lookout for making this interview possible.




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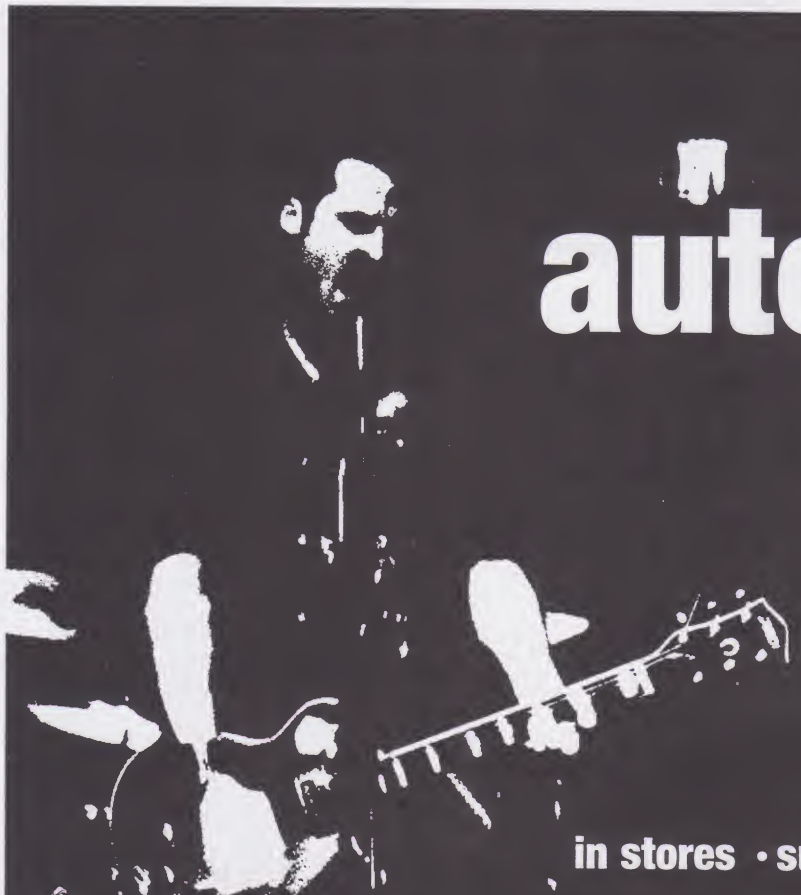
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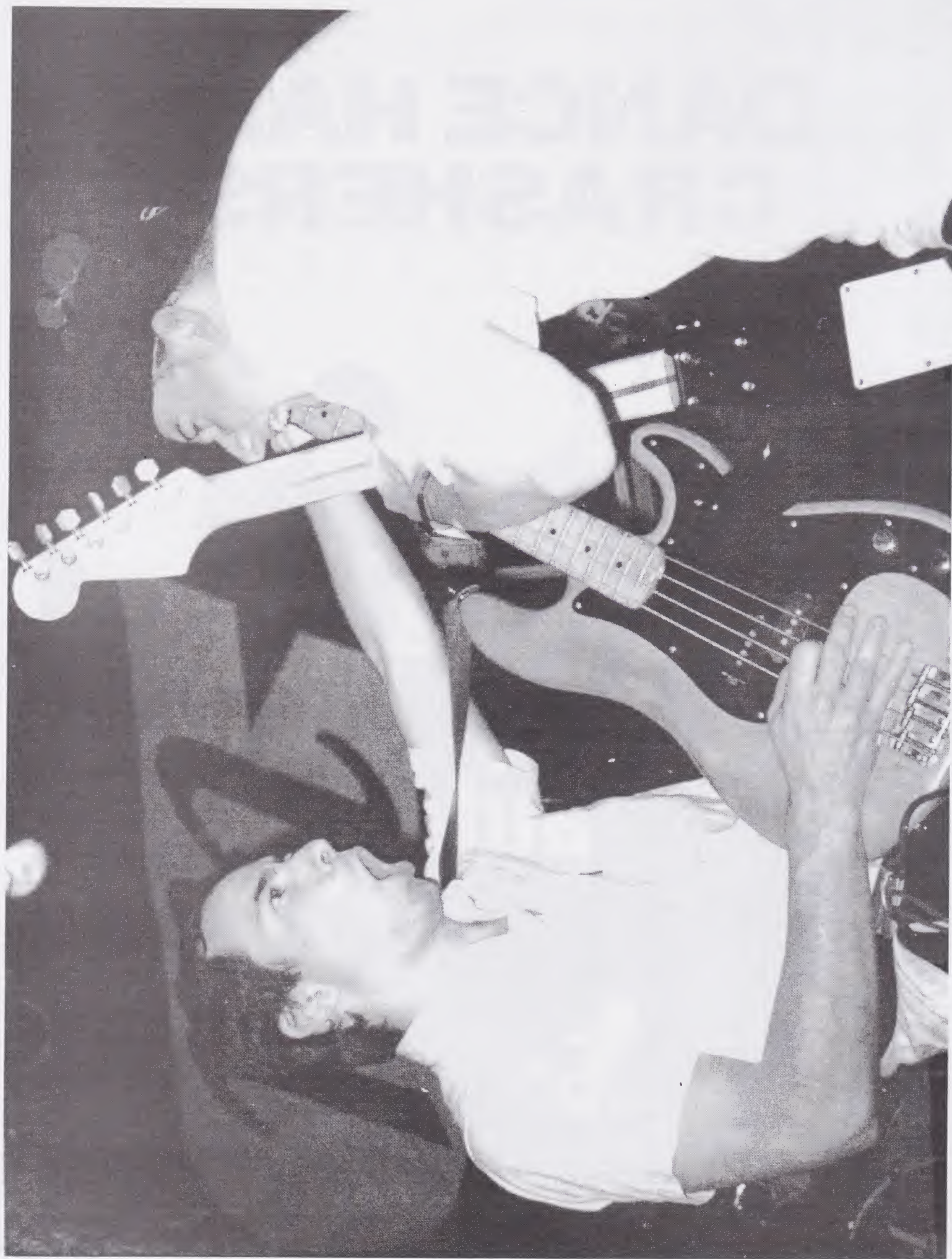


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MILLENCOLIN

After the release of their third album for Epitaph Records, entitled "Pennybridge Pioneers," Millencolin hit the road yet again, headlining the spring 2000 Punk O Rama tour. After taking nearly a year and a half off, Millencolin has returned with their most powerful and melodic album yet. Every song on the new record has like the catchiest chorus you've ever heard; it doesn't even matter what they're singing about, (although this album's lyrics are the best that Millencolin has written to date). It'd been four years since Millencolin last graced a stage in Chicago, and when the interview opportunity arose with these Swedish natives, I felt a bit more than excited about my chance to sit down and talk to this now legendary band. Sometime in early April Millencolin rocked the Metro and I chatted with singer/bassist Nikola. His responses may seem a bit vague at times, but please keep in mind the fact that he's from Sweden and can't speak the best English. Anyway...thanks again to Epitaph for helping to make this possible.

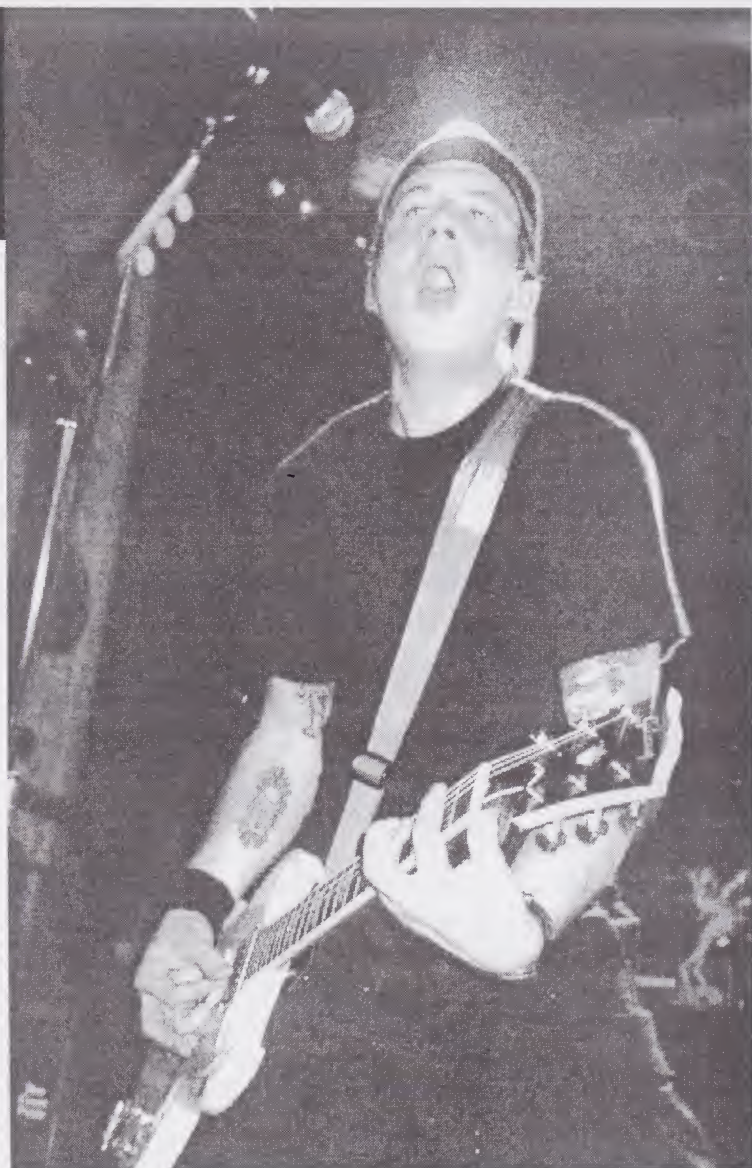
JIC-You're back touring in the USA for like the sixth time or something now...how are things going this year with being the headlining act of the Punk O Rama tour?

Nikola-It's going good...I think. I don't really have any experience with being on a bad tour, but it's really good...a lot of the shows are sold-out and the other bands are really nice guys so we're having a good time. There aren't any problems with this tour; everything's going pretty smooth.

JIC-The new album, "Pennybridge Pioneers," has been receiving a lot of positive response from most everyone...it's definitely my favorite Millencolin album. How would you describe the record and what would you say is its biggest difference compared to your other releases?

Nikola-The new album is pretty much a natural progression from the last album I'd say. One big difference is that we had a long time to work on this album. It's been a longer time between this album and the last one, than between the other two albums...so we had more time...

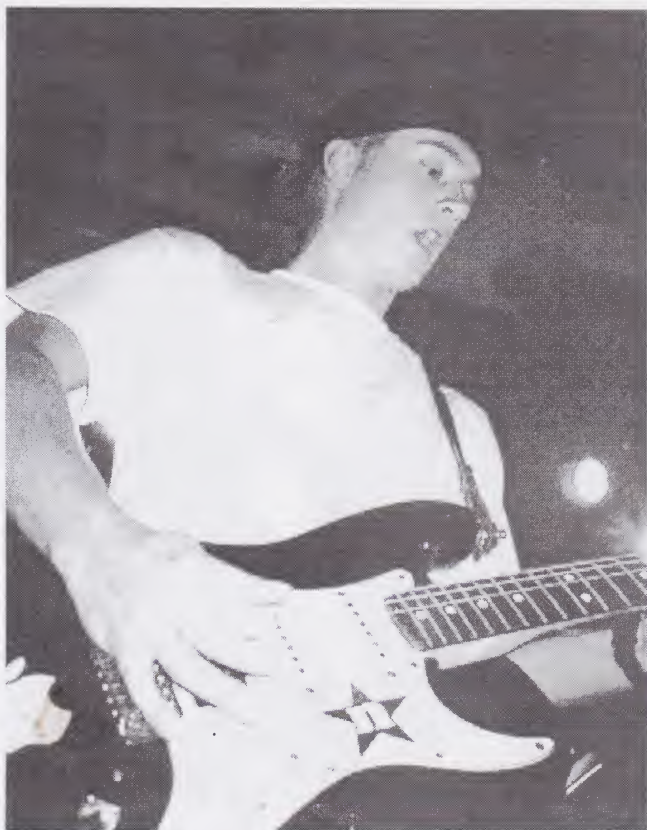
JIC-You took a year off or whatever...



Nikola-Yeah, a year and a half off almost. We had some time to do other stuff and we also got a lot of energy back for writing songs. The biggest difference in the sound I guess would be that for the first time we went to the States to record. We recorded the other albums with the same guy in Sweden...

JIC-I was going to ask about that...like what was it like to have Brett Gurewitz produce the album and record it in LA at Westbeach Recorders?

Nikola-It was a really nice and positive experience. Brett is a really nice guy just to hangout with and he did a really good job with the sound. He knows his studio and for us it was a big thing to go to Westbeach because when we started most of the bands that we looked up to in those days recorded in Westbeach with Brett. That was kind of a big thing. Sound-wise I think the new album sounds much better, it's more powerful and more rockin'. On the last two albums we didn't know too much about what kind of sound we wanted; we didn't know what was a good or bad sound.



Since Mathias (guitarist) has his own studio and has been working in a studio for the past couple of years he's learned a lot about sound. We've also all learned to play our instruments better and just learned to write songs better too. I'd say everything is a bit more focused. The kids or whatever think it's a bit slower since it doesn't have the fast drum beats, but that's just...

JIC-I just think it's more melodic, it's definitely more catchy and stuff...

Nikola-I think it's more everything; it has more power, more energy...the lyrics are more personal, there's more good melodies, more rock, more everything.

JIC-You keep touching on stuff that I'm about to ask and I wanted to ask about lyrics next...A lot of the lyrical content on the new record still deals with stuff you've sung about before, like growing up, moving forward, etc. But some of the lyrics seem to have a bit more sensitive feel this time around.

Would you say that's true or how do you feel about the lyrics on this album?

Nikola-I guess the lyrics are a bit more personal; I think we just skipped the kind of loony, happy, crazy songs that I used to write. Those songs might be funny to listen to once or twice, but I prefer to write about serious stuff since this is what we do...it means a lot to us; I might as well write lyrics that mean something. I have more confidence in myself to write personal lyrics now too. Because in the beginning you don't know too much, and now you know from experience what you like more and what kind of lyrics you prefer to write.

JIC-Erik (other guitarist) has done the artwork for all your previous records as well as this new one, right?

Nikola-Yeah, he first did the cover of the album as this big oil painting on some huge canvas and somehow he got it down to size, and that was actually

the first oil painting he'd done in like ten years.

JIC-Is it true that you guys are insanely popular in Europe compared to in the USA? Like are your shows a lot bigger or do you sell a lot more records over there?

Nikola-America is a big country, so the market here is a lot bigger than in Europe. Compared to the size I think we're bigger in Europe. Here you've got punk bands that sell millions of albums...so yeah; we're bigger in Europe. We actually used to be really big in Sweden in like '94 or '95, before we started to tour abroad; actually we were bigger in Sweden at that time than we are anywhere right now. We almost sold gold records (500,000 copies) in Sweden with our first two albums. Now we almost never play in Sweden because the whole scene isn't what it used to be; punk music isn't so hot there anymore.

JIC-Are you playing the Warped Tour for a second time this summer?

Nikola-Yeah, it should be a lot of fun. Hopefully we'll get a better slot this time; last time we either played the smaller stage at a good time or we played the big stage at a bad time, like early in the day. It was good though, it was a great thing for us, but this time I think it'll be even better. It's going to be a really fun tour and really important too.

JIC-Is Chicago one of your favorite US cities?

Nikola-We haven't seen much of the city...we played here four years ago and I think that's the only club show we've done...at the Fireside I think that was. On the Warped Tour in '97 we didn't get to play here because of the rain, some bands played but our slot got cancelled.

JIC-Tell me about the "Millencolin and the Hi-8 Adventures" VHS tape you recently released on Epitaph...

Nikola-When we took some time off Erik had the time to sit down and edit all the footage that we've had since our first tour; he'd been planning on doing it for a couple years. He had the time to do it and it was a good thing because we hadn't put out an album in a while. We put out the movie and then the B-sides CD, so it all worked out well for our fans and stuff.

JIC-Why'd you choose "Penguins and Polarbears" as the first single off the album? Are you happy with how the video turned out?



Nikola-We had to choose something for the first single and the other guys in the band wanted that song, I actually wanted "No Cigar." Actually the single hasn't been released here; Epitaph doesn't release singles like we do in Europe. So here they're actually trying to get "No Cigar" on the radio in like two weeks or something. Seems to me like that's kind of late since our "Penguins and Polarbears" single was released back in January in Europe. I don't know if Epitaph is just slow or if this is just the way it works. But we're happy with the results of the "Penguins and Polarbears" video; it was supposed to look good and it looks good. We shot it in LA, and just recently we shot another video for our next single, "Fox," and that was also shot in LA like the day before this tour started.

JIC-At this point in your career where would you like to go with the band? Are you satisfied with being popular in the underground or would you like to eventually breakthrough to the mainstream?

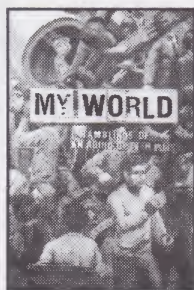
Nikola-Of course we'd like to breakthrough and sell millions of records, I mean why not? This is our job and we've done this for a long time; it'd be really nice if it could pay off like that. The main thing is that if we can write music that we can stand for then I don't think it'd be a bad thing for the band to become big. As long as we're happy with our music I don't care what other people think...so of course a breakthrough would be great.

I'd like to thank Nikola for taking the time for this interview and also for playing a great show last April. Millencolin tore through a 45-minute set, comprised mainly of songs from their Epitaph debut album "Life On A Plate," which was cool because it gave me a chance to remember how much I like that CD. But if you're just checking out Millencolin I really recommend their most recent disc, "Pennybridge Pioneers;" it's one of the best I've heard in a long time. Thanks again to the ever-friendly and talented Millencolin and for more band info check out www.millencolin.com.



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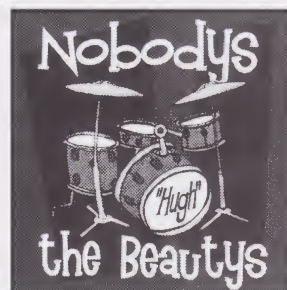
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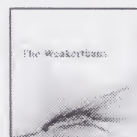
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THE★ATARIS

The Ataris are one of the country's biggest pop punk bands. After releasing their second full-length on Kung Fu Records, as well as an EP on Fat Wreck Chords last year, their popularity has just exploded. I was lucky enough to nab lead singer/guitarist Kris Roe before a recent sold-out show at the Fireside Bowl. We talked about many of the upcoming events and releases that are scheduled during the Ataris' very hectic next couple of months. Kris was nice enough to let me hangout in their van and answer all my questions, so thanks again for being a pal Kris.

JIC-You guys have a very busy spring and summer planned...you've got a split with Useless I.D. coming out next week, then you're playing some dates on the Fat Wreck Chords tour, and this summer you're doing the Warped Tour. Has the band ever been busier or more excited at any point in its career?

Kris-No, I think right now it's pretty much our busiest time that we've had in a long time, and that's just all attributed to the fact that we just want to go out and constantly tour and take our music to places where it's never been. We're not doing the full Warped Tour by the way, it's only five days in Texas that we're doing, but all the rest of the stuff is definitely going to take up a lot of our time within the next year. We're recording our new record in June and that comes out in October, and it's our last record on Kung Fu. And that's basically our...

JIC-Alright...you just touched on about three different questions that I was going to ask, so let's save some of that for right now. (Laughs).

Kris-Alright.

JIC-Let's talk about the split CD first...are all your songs on it going to be unreleased?

Kris-No, we just basically put out anything that we had lying around, and anything we'd ever put on a compilation. It's like eight songs, plus like one little half of a song at the end of the record. I was kind of opposed to doing it, but I wanted to help Useless I.D. out a lot because I like that band.

JIC-Why don't you tell me about those guys; I was curious what they sound like and how you got to know them since they're from Israel and all...

Kris-The story of how we met them is going to be inside the CD, so you'll just have to check that out, because it's a really silly story. They're really nice guys, and they kind of sound like the newer Lagwagon stuff. They're really poppy, kind of like Bracket meets Lagwagon except really original for that kind of music. Our songs on there are okay, there's like four 30-second songs and then four other songs; it's really short, like only 15 minutes of our stuff and 15 minutes of theirs'. We just hate it when people ask us to do compilations all the time and we don't have any songs. This is just our way of putting out everything we have on one release and not having to fuck with it.

JIC-Can you tell me anything about the new album that you're recording for Kung Fu in June?

Kris-We're recording it with Joey Cape and we're doing it at the Blasting Room in Ft. Collins with the guys from the Descendents and All. It's going to be a lot more well written, like a step from the better songs we have, which is like I would say "Your Boyfriend Sucks" and "My Hotel Year." Like that kind of stuff, just more powerful, like expanding on that. There's some piano too; it's still fast but it's just a little bit more put together.



JIC-It's been much talked about how Fat Wreck Chords tried to get you guys on their label and tried to buyout your contract from Kung Fu. So, after you record the new album in June you'll have fulfilled your contract with Kung Fu...are you going to stay with them or go with Fat Wreck Chords?

Kris-Oh, we're not staying on Kung Fu. No offense to them, I mean we like Kung Fu, but that's our whole deal; we feel that Kung Fu has done all they can for us. We really need to kind of go on to something a little bit bigger. We really don't know what we're going to do; a lot of us want to go to Fat, and we also kind of just want to see what happens.

JIC-So it's true that Fat tried to like buyout the contract...

Kris-No, I don't know where that came from. Fat just basically put out that EP with us, just in the meantime while we were waiting for "Blue Skies" to come out. Because "Blue Skies" was supposed to come out around October, but Kung Fu told us that it'd be pushed-back till like after winter and into last spring almost. We were kind of pissed-off, so we asked Fat Mike if he'd put something out on Fat and he said sure, so he put out the EP and that was that. Then he went and just to be cool he put us on some compilations like "Life in the Fat Lane" and "Short Music." All of that combined started the ball rolling, because we were already out touring and everything, but we just needed some boost and that's why Fat Mike helped us; he liked us and wanted to give us a little boost. Then after that everyone kind of just got behind us, and that's what we needed. We were appreciative not only to the Vandals and Kung Fu, but also a lot of it to Mike and Joey

too. I think a lot of that is going to matter when we decide what label to go to. If Fat will take us then they take us, but we don't really know.

JIC-I know your band is good pals with Blink 182...Mark (Blink 182's singer) sang back-ups on a recent EP of yours...

Kris-We know them alright, but I mean it's not like we hangout with them or anything...what's your question, I'm sorry. (Laughs).

JIC-I was just wondering if you had the chance would you follow their lead and sign with a major label?

Kris-I mean it just depends; if it was right at the time for the band then we'd do it. Our band has kind of built itself up as being this band that's just kind of like completely do it yourself and completely kind of just going out and slaving and touring on our own and what not. We respect bands like Avail or Fugazi or Fifteen and bands like that who just went out there with this work ethic, and that's good. You just got to do what's right at the time. I don't think I ever want to be as big as Blink or like that status just because you give up so much control of your band. Our band likes to be able to have low door prices, not play fuckin' stupid rock clubs where the bouncer's going to beat-up the kids, have stupid big stages and barricades and so forth. We want to have that control; we want to be able to write all our fans back personally, we want to be able to control our own website, control our own merchandise. You wouldn't believe how much of that shit you'd have to give up. It becomes so much of a business, and that's good to a point, I mean sure I'd love to fuckin' make enough money where I could set myself and my daughter and my girlfriend, everyone, set us all up for life. But I'd rather do it working over the long run. Fuck, I don't know, whatever our future holds. I've seen bands eat their words all the time; like Jawbreaker, Bad Religion, Samiam. All those bands, I read so many things saying like "Oh, we never want to sign to a major." And then they do it. I don't want to be a complete hypocrite, but if I do it it's my choice and fuck everyone else.





JIC-Where'd the name "the Ataris" come from?

Kris-My friend actually, who showed up tonight, he's a good friend of mine named Mike who I used to hang around with, came up with it. I was looking for a name to call my demo tape that I would give to bands, and I'd just record songs with a drum machine, and I didn't have a name. And I wanted to use the name "The Methadones," and that was actually a band name that was already going to be used by like Vapid and Panic after Sludgeworth broke-up. Like in between Sludgeworth and Screeching Weasel he was doing a more Ramones-type band called the Methadones. I found that that was already taken, so Mike was like "Why don't you use The Ataris?" Because I had about 500 Atari games, I collected Atari games, and that was it.

JIC-You play a left-handed guitar or something, correct?

Kris-I play a right-handed guitar turned upside-down.

JIC-Okay...that's what I wanted to ask about. How'd you ever learn to do that or how'd you develop that technique?

Kris-When I was little I was really into Kiss. My dad got me my first guitar, and it was a Kiss guitar, and I later found out that the guitar was strung like that, like it was a manufacturing-flaw or something; it was a toy guitar, but it had steel strings. I always played that guitar and the low E string was on the bottom, so you had to like turn it around, it was weird, but it all leads back to that. I was three years old and I didn't know any better. I try and play it correctly now but I don't have coordination in this hand, I can't do it.

JIC-What's the meaning behind all the star designs you use on your t-shirts and albums?

Kris-I just have this fascination with the stars, just...it's pretty simple. My daughter is named Starla. I don't know...I just like stars, they're pretty ya know, without sounding too lame or anything.

JIC-Final comments?

Kris-Like I said we're recording in June and have the split coming out this week. Then we've got the Warped Tour, like five days in early August; we have weekend shows throughout the summer too. Then we're probably going to tour when the next record comes out in October, and that'll be our next time we're around here. I think the next time we go out on tour we're probably going to open for some other people because we've done enough headlining tours on our own for a while. You've got to gain some other fans by doing that. I guess that's it...and if you would print our website address in there its www.Ataris.com.

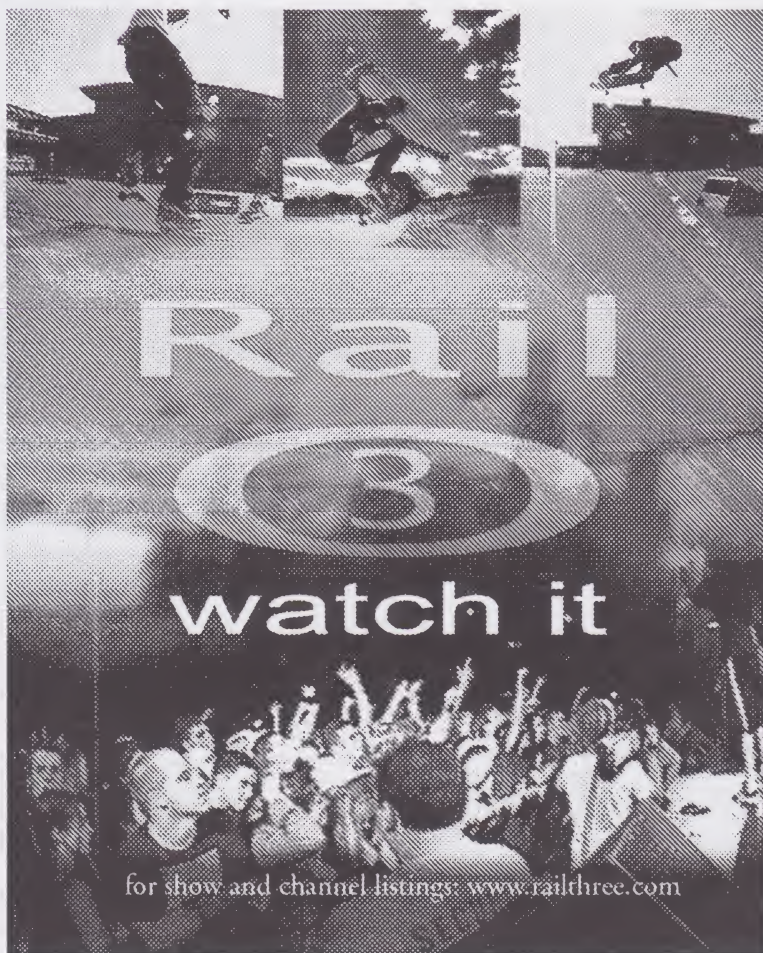
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dillinger four

Dillinger Four is my favorite band in the whole world; they're also the best band in the world, but not just because they're my favorite. If you've only got half a brain you're probably already familiar with these guys, so I won't waste any space describing them. D4 played the Fireside sometime this past spring and I spoke with St. Patrick and Erik about what's new with the band. Here's what was said...

JIC-Since the new album "Versus God" will have already been released by the time everyone's reading this I figured it'd be a good idea to ask first about the record...are you done recording it yet? How'd the recording process and everything go?

Erik-We just finished it a week ago actually; these guys finished the last part of it at six in the morning before we left on this tour, and...it's good. It was sort of hectic; in the past, or at least on the last record, not like we made a lot of records, we sort of did everything broken-up, like we tracked everything and then took some time off, then mixed everything and took some time off. And this one we sort of did all in one straight shot, sort of non-stop. That was a little weird, but we did it at the same place that we did our last one, and with the same guy that we've done most of our stuff with; in that sense it was really comfortable and cool.

JIC-What's the main difference in terms of style or sound, and also lyrical content, between this one and your last album on Hopeless?



Patrick-Lyrical content it's pretty much in the same line...

Erik-Yeah, lyrical content is definitely like along the same lines...

Patrick-Music I wouldn't say is like a far cry, but I would say in general it's more mid-tempo than "Midwestern Songs..." was, not like slow though.

Erik-It's probably a little more melodic overall. Probably song for song it's a little more melodic than the last one. Production is kind of different, but I don't really know like what the standout difference would be.

Patrick-I think it sounds cleaner than the last one, but it's still not polished. Cause when we went into it that was like...everything we've ever recorded that's always been our biggest concern that we don't want things to sound like very polished. But we've kind of realized with a few of the mistakes we've done in the past that maybe a little bit of clean is good, but polished you don't necessarily need. Nice not fancy, which actually is the real working title of the album. Dillinger Four is nice, but not fancy. (Laughs).

JIC-How'd you come up with "Versus God" as the title for the record?

Patrick-Cause we were just really sick and tired of all this God shit actually. (Laughs). Literally the first five minutes that we had like thought of the words "Dillinger Four versus God," it was kind of something that we laughed at. Like, "We should call the album 'Dillinger Four versus God,'" and then we were thinking about it and we were like, "Yeah...fuck it. Yeah, Dillinger Four versus God. Yes." The whole Christian hardcore and Christian pop, and the "No, let's be open-minded" thing is like coming back into vogue again, so we'd rather be the shit in the punch-bowl and put out a record called "Dillinger Four versus God." I have a lot of friends who've had abortions and I have a lot of gay friends too, and I'd rather back them up and put out a record that blatantly explains that I'd like to beat-up God if I could fight him. (Laughs).

JIC-As long as we're talking about your upcoming releases I wanted to mention the split with Pinhead Gunpowder...like when's that due out and everything?

Erik-Less than a month...

Patrick-That'll be very out by the time this is.

Erik-Yeah, middle of April...

JIC-How'd you guys ever meet-up with Billie Joe and Adeline Records?

Erik-Honestly he just called us like out of the blue. I mean we have some mutual friends, obviously Patrick is in Cleveland Bound Death Sentence with Aaron, who is also in Pinhead Gunpowder. Billie started focusing more and more on Adeline, and I don't exactly know for sure where he heard us...

Patrick-He heard us actually at Lookout, like he went to Lookout and they were playing it there, and he's like "Oh, what's this?" And then he picked it up and he liked it. Aaron had told me for years that supposedly Pinhead Gunpowder ripped-off a Dillinger Four song, I don't know which one it is, but anyhow he supposedly talked to Aaron at one point and Aaron was like, "Yeah, that's the band I told you about before, blah, blah, blah..."

Erik-He called us up and asked us to do something on Adeline, like he sort of left it up to us, and then we said, "Well shit, let's do a split with Pinhead Gunpowder."

Patrick-Well actually, he called us up to ask us to do something and then we sat around laughing because we figured somebody prank-called us and told us it was Billie Joe. (Laughs). We totally blew him off for like three weeks.



JIC-I don't want to offend you guys with this next question...

Patrick-God damn it. (Laughs).

JIC-I've heard some rumors that after the "Versus God" album for Hopeless you guys will be free to go to a different label and that your next record will be on Adeline Records or whatever...

Patrick-No, the truth is actually that we're going to Epitaph and we're on the Warped Tour. (Laughs).

Erik-It's true that we only had to do two records with Hopeless, but I mean you can see how long it took us to do a second record after our first, we have a long time before we do anything. Hopeless has been awesome; there's no reason we'd leave.

JIC-I've heard some interesting things about your recent performance at the SXSW (South By Southwest Showcase)...why don't you tell me how that show went in your own words...

Patrick-You've probably heard more about it than we have, I was pretty loaded. I don't want to completely bag on the show we did, because it wasn't one of those things like where we got to the show and were like, "Oh, this sucks, this is totally music industry." Cause people could pay individually to get into the show, and it wasn't crazy expensive, and it was a really big bill that we played. I think it was a six or seven band bill, so I mean that was all cool. But it was just one of those things where you're kind of hanging around, and there's so many people walking around with the corny laminates around their necks. And guys walking around with portable DAT machines with boom mics getting stupid quotes off of other assholes about stupid shit that no one should really care about. And the next thing you know, you've been sitting there for like five hours taking shots because someone told you that you had to be there to load-in at like nine o'clock in the morning even though you're not playing till midnight. I think we were way more in-tune with like most people who were there for the show than probably most of the industry people. I can't even say all the industry people cause there were even industry people I saw who were coked-up and drunk out of their minds and fuckin' doing karate-chops and shit. But I don't know...I don't really remember much about it, I remember making fun of the "music industry" a lot, but...

Erik-You had a drumstick in your butt.



Patrick-I had a drumstick in my butt. (Laughs). I don't think collectively we remember that much, it sounded really weird too, so even playing-wise I'm not really sure I would know.

JIC-Tell me about your (Erik's) bar that recently opened in Minneapolis called "The Triple Rock."

Erik-It's like a small bar with a full-menu; it's more of a bar than a restaurant. Me and my now wife Gretchen and an old friend of ours, actually me and Patrick's, started working on it for a few years and we got it open. I think we've been open for about 18 months now. It's a lot like a lot of Chicago bars actually, which is kind of like what was missing in Minneapolis, which is kind of what we wanted to open. It's just like a normal, small kind of bar with a punk rock jukebox and a pool table. It's pretty laid back; we're planning to expand it and start doing shows in it, but that keeps getting pushed-back a little bit cause obviously it's a pretty big undertaking, but it's something we want to do really bad. And food-wise we have a lot of...for a bar we have kind of an insane amount of vegan and vegetarian food, like that's one thing that people sort of notice that sticks out about it.

JIC-Tell me how you (Patrick) ended-up on the cover of the Hopeless zine #4?

Patrick-I don't know man. Darren from Hopeless called...that's way more like kind of a question for Hopeless. He called up and asked if there was a picture lying around that they could use and I was like, "No" and he was like, "Why don't you just take a picture of yourself naked." And that was kind of slipping into goofy, pseudo-porn territory, (laughs) but we had a friend Dan who actually is a professional photographer, who's taken pictures of us before. He had a set-up already in the studio that he works at and I just came in after hours; we just got a couple cases of beer, and the guys came down, and I took my clothes off and stood around for a while.

JIC-You're one of the few pop punk bands whose lyrics have social and political commentary...why don't you tell me about the importance of lyrics to your band?

Erik-Patrick got me into punk when I was 13 or whatever and the punk that I've always been attracted to the most has been the stuff that had something beyond just a clever twist of phrase in the lyrics. I think that's just been true for both of us; ultimately the bands that we've always really liked the most have been like that. We like all kinds of stuff, but at the end of the day it's one of my favorite parts of punk and I wouldn't want to do a band that at least wasn't trying to look at some bigger issues.

Patrick-It's kind of a hard question to answer, we actually do get asked that a lot and it's really hard, cause the thing is you don't want to come-off sounding like some high and mighty fuckhead. Cause obviously there's all sorts of lyrics that are right on. Just for us personally we feel really comfortable with it; I think a lot of people probably wouldn't.

JIC-You guys toured with some amazing bands last summer like Fifteen and Leatherface...do you have bigger and better plans for this summer?

Patrick-I think it's a whole lot of ourselves this summer...

Erik-We got really lucky last summer, I mean Leatherface...we only did a handful of shows with them, but that was like a dream for us cause we've loved that band for a long time. We never thought we'd even see them, much less get to play with them. And then the Take Action tour...we got to tour with FYP and we didn't even know those guys, and that was great, and Chaka who we're out with again now. So yeah, we got really lucky. This summer we're going to Europe, and we're basically going by ourselves, although we're talking with a British band called Four Letter Word, who are on BYO who we like a lot. We're planning on touring some more in the US in the later summer too.

At that point D4 had to go load-in their gear, so we concluded the interview. I'd like to thank again Erik and Patrick for being great interviewees and for being so friendly. You can contact the D4 Army at P.O. Box 40116/St. Paul, MN/55104 or www.hopelessrecords.com. Thanks for reading the issue kiddies; we'll be back again toward late summer with another one. Please be sure to pick it up!



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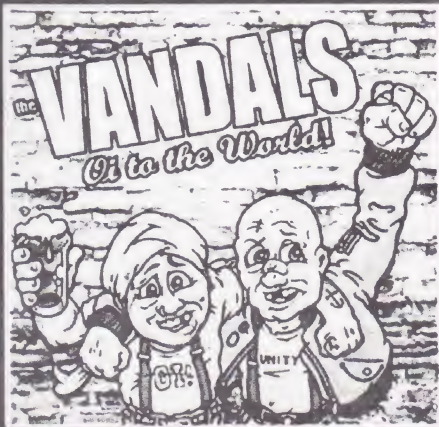


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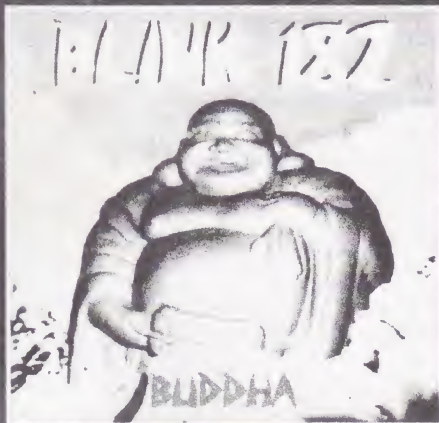
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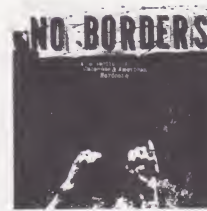


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